

NYC'S FRACKED FUTURE? P8

THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #189, August 18 – September 16, 2013
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

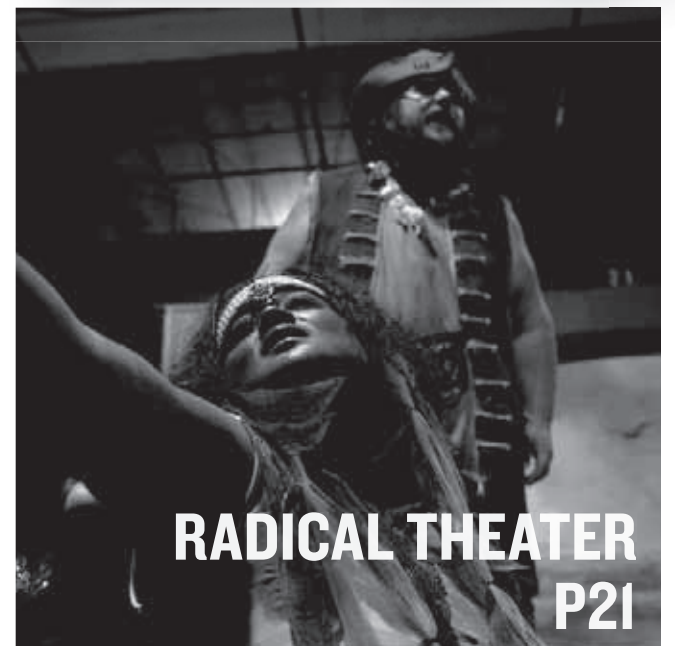
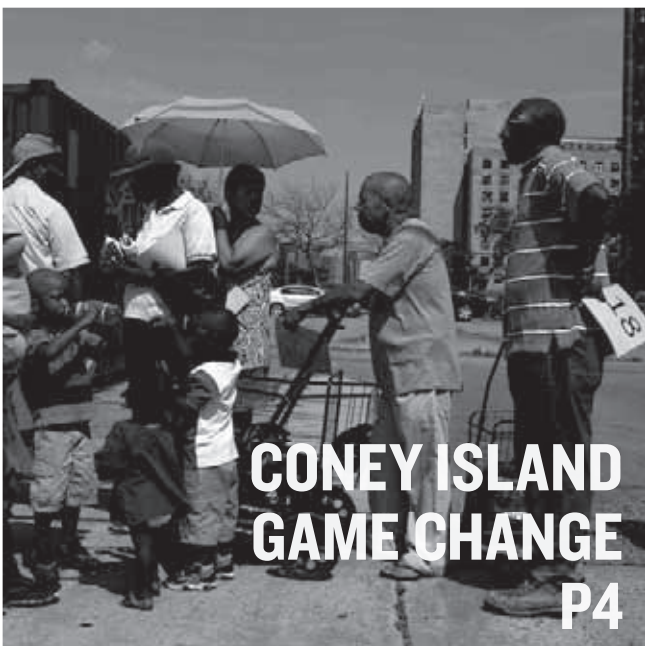


Burdened

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLACK IN AMERICA

By Nicholas Powers, p14

DAVID HOLLENBACH





THE INDEPENDENT, INC.
666 BROADWAY, SUITE 510
NEW YORK, NY 10012
PHONE: 212-904-1282

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Ellen Davidson, Anna Gold,
John Tarleton

MANAGING EDITOR/COORDINATOR:
Alina Mogilyanskaya

EDITORS:
Ellen Davidson, Mary Annaïse
Heglar, Elizabeth Henderson,
Nicholas Powers

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:
John Tarleton

ILLUSTRATION COORDINATOR:
Frank Reynoso

DESIGNERS:
Steven Arnerich, Anna Gold,
Mikael Tarkela

CALENDAR EDITORS:
Seamus Creighton,
Gabriela Kruschewsky

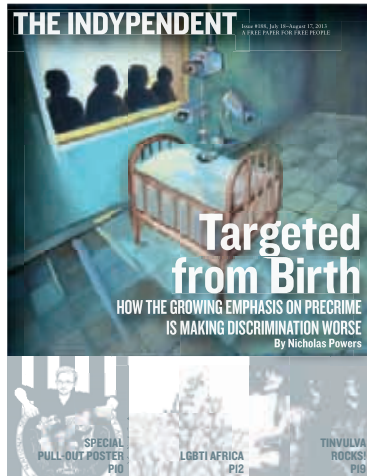
INTERNS:
Timothy Bidon, Emily Masters

GENERAL INQUIRIES:
contact@indypendent.org
SUBMISSIONS AND NEWS TIPS:
submissions@indypendent.org
SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS:
indypendent.org/donate
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION:
ads@indypendent.org
READER COMMENTS:
letters@indypendent.org
VOLUNTEER:
volunteer@indypendent.org

The Independent is a New York-based free newspaper published 13 times a year on Mondays for our print and online audience of more than 100,000 readers. It is produced by a network of volunteers who report, write, edit, draw, design, take photos, distribute, fundraise and provide website management. Since 2000, more than 700 journalists, artists and media activists have participated in this project. Winner of more than 50 New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Independent* is funded by subscriptions, reader donations, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of people locally and globally. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTORS: Sam Alcott, Bennett Baumer, Catherine Byun, Jose Carmona, Hye Jin Chung, Renée Feltz, Seth Fisher, Lynne Foster, David Hollenbach, Dondi J, Adam Johnson, Marty Kirchner, Rob LaQuinta, Gary Martin, Roberto Meneses, Andy Pugh, Ann Schneider, Jim Secula, Marlena Buczek Smith, Elke Sudin, Gabriella Szpant, Lucy Valkury, Beth Whitney, and Amy Wolf.

the reader's voice



BREAKING THE SILENCE

Thank you for publishing the essay by Gerald Meyer (“Party Like It’s 1937,” June *Indypendent*) about the important role the Communist Party played in the history of the U.S. Left. That article breaks through the almost complete 50-year silence on the Left about the old CP and its achievements. (Thus, young Occupy anarchists, who have a kind of generational chauvinism, dismiss almost all prior left practice without knowing anything about it.) It’s essential that activists, whatever their view of the CP, learn from this history and also avoid engaging in the kind of destructive red-baiting that weakens our movement. Also it’s a great title; 1937 is when many would most positively see the CP.

—JACKIE DiSALVO
*Occupy Wall Street
Labor Outreach Committee*

REMEMBERING ERIC LEMBEMBE

The death of Cameroonian LGBTI activist Eric Lembembe (see below) is a saddeningly harsh and stark reminder of the risk that is taken daily all over the world for people to have the right to be who they are. It takes a large

sacrifice to report on and express the struggle to overcome oppression. Thank you to the *Indy* for providing an open and insightful platform in the fight for truth and justice; R.I.P. Eric Lembembe — good to see his commitment and hear his words (“Cameroon’s ‘Gay Scare,’” July *Indypendent*) before his death.

—SHELL SHEDDY

TIN VULVA

Great write-up (“Exhilarating Defiance,” July *Indypendent*) on a better than great group! They deserve the acclaim and more.

—BILLY

Responses to “As the NSA Follows You, We Follow the Money,” July 18:

The military-industrial complex has become an enemy (within) of American democracy ... and the American people. They are blood-sucking vampires who are promoting perpetual war and leading the charge to eviscerate the Bill of Rights. Any question about the effectiveness of the domestic use of the PRISM spy program has been rendered moot by its disclosure. There is no longer any credible justification for its use. We the American people, realistically, are its only remaining targets.

—RICHARD BITTNER

Keeping the people scared and profiting from it is a very old and lucrative business. Thanks for this article, hopefully it is widely read.

—KARL

Additional comments after this article was reposted to c o m m o n d r e a m s . o r g / view/2013/07/22-7:

Excellent piece which sheds some light on a tiny bit of the massive

corruption of the governing class of America.

—REVLIMID

It is a good piece and we need more of them. Some people may know this generally, but it’s important to name names. Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA) needs to go, as do 98 percent of them. We need to clean house from the President on down and start all over again.

—JANET WISE

Following the money should become the major project of journalists. If the people knew how much profit the psychopaths in charge make off of their patriotic wars and spying, maybe someone would take notice.

—TOM CARBERRY

Nice article, Ms. Masters. You are right on the money. The problem is we don’t have the 535 elected officials to stop it. We have a runaway government, bought and paid for by our tax dollars and the lobbying of the very companies that were awarded the contracts. This is the biggest web of corruption and treason the world has ever seen. Short of a bloody revolution, I don’t see these cowards in Washington giving up their money and power, because let’s face facts, jail is their next stop.

—BORN FREEMEN

Government privatization is bullshit sellout of public welfare and interests to the crony capitalists who destroy real markets by monopoly powers or capital controls. All are lost in the voice mail of the corporate 666 who limit all human choice for their maximum profit or security.

—ITSTHEBIRD

This should be front-page *New York Times*.

—FRIGATE

More of this type of exposé. We provide welfare to the defense contractors and think it is capitalism. We provide welfare to the poorest of the poor and call it socialism.

—GEORGE RENAUD

FIELD FIGHT

In Bennett Baumer’s article, “A Bumper Crop of New Books,” (July *Indypendent*), it states that the author of *Lettuce Wars* (myself) was “kicked out of a martyred farm worker’s funeral” in the 1979 lettuce strike in the Imperial Valley. This is not exactly correct. The day after the assassination of striker Rufino Contreras, the United Farm Workers called for a one-day general strike. I was at the border crossing that morning of the general strike with a reporter from the Revolutionary Worker newspaper from L.A. We were physically assaulted by Frank Ortiz, who had replaced Marshall Ganz as the strike coordinator. As we left the area we were jumped by union goons. Looking back on this, it’s clear to see that this was part the pattern of internal repression in the union that later that year led to a split in the UFW and the eventual expulsion of the union’s key rank-and-file leaders. However, I did attend the funeral of Rufino Contreras several days after the incident described above.

Thank you.

—BRUCE NEUBURGER

COMMENT ON THE NEWS AT INDYPENDENT.ORG OR SEND A LETTER TO THE INDEPENDENT, 666 BROADWAY, SUITE 510, NEW YORK, NY 10012 OR EMAIL LETTERS@INDYPENDENT.ORG. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND CLARITY.



ERASING 76 CRIMES

DEATH OF A JOURNALIST

In the July issue of *The Independent*, Cameroonian journalist and LGBT rights activist Eric Lembembe wrote about the burgeoning “gay scare” in his country. As he reported, homophobic voices on the ground, including some journalists, preachers and politicians, “sensationalize the issue in order to whip the public into a frenzy, taking advantage of Cameroonians’ fear of the unknown.”

LGBT Cameroonians face not only the risk of harassment and legal prosecution that Lembembe described in his piece, but also the danger of physical violence and in some cases, death. On Monday, July 15, just one day after *The Indypendent* went to press, Lembembe was found violently murdered in his home in Cameroon’s capital city

of Yaoundé. According to one friend, Lembembe’s body showed signs of torture: his neck and feet appeared to have been broken, and his face, hands, and feet had been burned with a clothes iron.

The widespread assumption is that Lembembe’s killing was a hate crime motivated by his activism, though apart from arresting a pair of Lembembe’s friends on suspicion of the murder and releasing them shortly thereafter, Cameroonian authorities have been lax in investigating the murder.

More than that, the government has not condemned the killing, a troubling sign for the LGBT community. “In the current environment, the lack of action and clear condemnation by the government sends a message to anyone with homophobic feelings that they can act on them in the most violent way imaginable without facing any consequences,” said Neela Ghoshal, a senior researcher on LGBT rights at Human Rights Watch and a colleague of Lembembe’s.

Lembembe’s murder followed a spate of hate

crimes against sexual minorities. In light of his death, LGBT organizations have chosen to focus on developing better safety measures. “Security needs to be a primary concern,” Ghoshal said. Until then, many groups have suspended their advocacy, education, outreach and health services.

Lembembe was one of the region’s most prominent LGBT rights activists and the executive director of the Cameroonian Foundation for AIDS (CAMFAIDS). His organization assiduously documented arrests, violence and blackmail against LGBT people. He was also a contributor to the blog “Erasing 76 Crimes,” which reports on the LGBT rights struggle in the 76 countries where homosexuality is criminalized.

“He was the voice of the LGBTI community in Cameroon,” said Ghoshal.

—ALINA MOGILYANSKAYA
& JOHN TARLETON

DAILY

11am–1pm • Free
VIDEO: PEOPLE’S LAUNDROMAT THE-
ATER. There’s more than soap ’n suds at
one Harlem laundromat that is showcas-
ing independent media — music videos,
documentary shorts, animations, video
art and more — 24 hours a day, every day
until the end of summer.
Clean Rite Center Laundromat
370 Lenox Ave
646-678-4240 • laundromatproject.org

EVERY WEDNESDAY

12:30–2:30pm • Suggested donation \$10
WORKSHOP: NYWC DROP-IN WRITING
WORKSHOP. Come join an open environ-
ment for writing and sharing your craft.
Writers of all genres are welcome, and no
registration is required.
80 Hanson Pl
718-398-2883 x301 • nywriterscoalition.
org

EVERY SUNDAY

6-8pm • Free
WORKSHOP: HOW TO REPAIR YOUR
BIKE. Keep your bike out of the shop and
on the streets.
Time’s Up
99 South 6th St, off Bedford Ave
212-802-8222 • times-up.org

SAT AUG 17–SUN AUG 25

1–11pm • Sliding scale free/suggested
donation/\$10
EVENT: SOUL OF BROOKLYN WEEK.
Come celebrate African Diaspora arts
and culture at the fourth annual Soul
of Brooklyn week. Daily events include
concerts, screenings and workshops that
aim to support and promote local organi-
zations and African-American businesses
throughout Brooklyn.
Various locations, Bklyn
718-230-0492 • mocada.org

TUES AUG 20

6–8pm • Free
PANEL: USING MEDIA TO TEACH FOR
CHANGE. Join us for a discussion with
Global Action Project and Sandy Storyline
on how we can use media to strengthen
community, amplify unheard stories and
work to create a more just world.
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-NYC
275 Madison Ave, Suite 2114 (entrance at
40th St)
917-409-1040 • rosalex-nyc.org

WED AUG 21

7pm • \$35
READING: AUTHORS PRESENT TO SAVE
REVOLUTION BOOKS WITH WALTER
MOSLEY. The lease has expired and much
help is needed to keep this not-for-profit
bookstore open. Join the battle for Revo-
lution Books and attend this event. An
intimate evening with Walter Mosley.
Revolution Books
146 W 26 St
212-691-3345 • revolutionbooksnyc.org

FRI AUG 23

5:30pm • Free
99% OWS: WALL STREET REOCCUPIED!
WEEKLY SPEAKOUTS FOR JUSTICE
AND DEMOCRACY. Join us on the steps



DREAM ON: Rally and march on Aug. 24 to commemorate the 1963 March on Washington.

of Federal Hall at 26 Wall St to have your
voice heard and speak your mind.
Federal Hall Steps
26 Wall St
nycga.net

SAT AUG 24

All Day • Free
50TH ANNIVERSARY MARCH ON WASH-
INGTON. The 1963 March on Washing-
ton helped pave the way for the great
victories of the Civil Rights Movement. 50
years later those gains are at risk and we
must stand against the recent attack on
voter rights, Stand Your Ground laws and
racial profiling, as well as to continue to
raise awareness about unemployment,
poverty, gun violence, immigration, gay
rights and other critical issues affecting
our nation. Buses will be leaving from
various points in the NYC area early on
the morning of the 24th.
National Action Network
106 W 145th St
877-626-4651 • nationalactionnetwork.
net

SAT AUG 24

11:30am–1:30pm • Free
WORKSHOP: SELF-DEFENSE FOR
WOMEN AND TRANS PEOPLE. Calling
all women, trans, and non-conforming
genders to Brooklyn for a free two-hour
self-defense class. The class will be
open to all levels of experience, and will
incorporate real-life scenarios as well as
effective ways to get out of them.
Traditional Okinawan Karate of Brooklyn
248 McKibbin St, Bklyn
718-418-9892 • tokarate.com

SAT AUG 24

3–8pm • \$15
FESTIVAL: DISSIDENT ARTS FESTIVAL.
An annual commemoration of jazz, new
music, poetry and film. This year’s festival
will also be dedicated to Trayvon Martin

and other victims of racist violence.
Brecht Forum
451 West Street
212-242-4201 • dissidentarts.com

SUN AUG 25

2:30pm • Free
STUDY CIRCLE: ANARCHIST READING
GROUP. The Anarchist Reading Group
discusses historical and contemporary
texts to promote the study of self-
organization and mutual aid in order to
help realize a society free of all forms of
social domination.
Bluestockings Bookstore



OUTDOOR MOVIE: Wild Style plays at East River Park Amphitheater Aug. 26.

172 Allen St
212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

MON AUG 26

6–9pm • Free
MOVIE: 30TH ANNIVERSARY SCREEN-
ING OF WILD STYLE. Discover the true
roots of rap in this 1983 film that cap-
tures the hardcore South Bronx scene at
its birth. Featured performers include DJ
Grand Master Flash, Grand Master Caz
and The Cold Crush Brothers, and The
Rock Steady Crew. Also showcases the
works of legendary subway artists Lee
Quinones and Sandra Pink Fabara and
follows the outlaw artists through the
trainyards to the clubs where Hip-Hop
music and B-Boy culture were born. Live

performances and guests including Fab 5
Freddy and Lady Pink.
East River Park Amphitheater
cityparksfoundation.org

MON SEPT 2

11am • Free
PARADE: WEST INDIAN AMERICAN
DAY CARNIVAL. Join more than a million
New Yorkers at the city’s largest ethnic
celebration of the year. There will be
more than 40 costumed bands, scores of
floats, great food and more.
Eastern Parkway
Crown Heights, Brooklyn

718-467-1797 • wiadcacarnival.org

TUE SEPT 10

7pm • Free
BOOK LAUNCH: LOOKING FOR PALES-
TINE: GROWING UP CONFUSED IN AN
ARAB-AMERICAN FAMILY. First genera-
tion American Najla Said tells her experi-
ence of growing up in New York City
while facing her own personal cultural
conflicts of being Arab in America. The
book was adapted from Said’s previous
one-woman play Palestine, in which she
grappled with being Arab in a post 9/11
NYC.
Alwan for the Arts
16 Beaver St, 4th Fl
646-732-3261 • alwanforthearts.org

FRI SEPT 13

6:30–8:30pm • \$3
READING: EXPERIMENTATION AND THE
BLACK DISCUSSION. Join author Evie
Shockley in discussing her new book,
Renegade Poetics: Black Aesthetics and
Formal Innovation in African-American
Poetry. Shockley will be accompanied by
poets La Tasha N. Diggs, John Keene and
Dawn Lundy Martin; expect wine and an in-
depth dialogue surrounding black aesthetic
in poetry.
Museum of Contemporary African Diaspo-
ran Arts
80 Hansen Pl
718-230-0492 • mocada.org

SAT SEPT 14

4–6pm • Free
MOVIE: REFLECTIONS UNHEARD: BLACK
WOMEN IN CIVIL RIGHTS. Filmmaker
Nev Nnaji screens her new documentary
on the marginalization of black women
between the intersections of Black Power
and feminist ideologies of the 1960s and
1970s up to the present day. There will be
a conversation afterwards with Nnaji and
Melissa Harris-Perry, author of Sister Citi-
zen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women
in America.
Schomburg Center
515 Malcolm X Blvd
212-491-2200 • nypl.org/locations/schom-
burg

SUN SEPT 15

7pm • \$15
DEDICATION CEREMONY: HOMELESS
LIBERATION REFERENCE LIBRARY. Join in
the dedication of a library that is conceptu-
alized, created and run by homeless New
Yorkers, and will provide people experienc-
ing homelessness with the tools to change
their lives. Your ticket gets you wine, cheese
and a book dedicated in your honor.
Picture the Homeless
2427 Morris Ave, Bx
646-314-6423 • picturethethehomeless.org

MON SEPT 16-SUN SEPT 22

10am–6pm • Free
FESTIVAL: BROOKLYN BOOK FESTIVAL.
Get ready to explore the world of literature
with Brooklyn’s eighth annual book festival.
The event is regarded as the largest free
literary extravaganza in all of NYC. Look for
author appearances, screenings, bookstore
readings, literary games, kick-off parties
and more.
Brooklyn Borough Hall and Plaza
209 Joralemon Street
718-802-3852 • brooklynbookfestival.org

SAT SEPT 28

1–5pm • \$20/Sliding scale
WORKSHOP: INTRODUCTION TO JOUR-
NALISM. Have you wanted to try your hand
at reporting but weren’t sure where to
start? The editors of The Indypendent will
be leading a workshop on the basics of re-
porting. The workshop includes role plays,
group discussions, practice interviews
and lots of writing. Spaces are limited.
To receive an application, email alina@
indypendent.org.
The Indypendent
666 Broadway, Suite 510 (conference room)
212-904-1282 • indypendent.org

After the Disaster HOW SANDY HAS CHANGED THE GAME IN CONEY ISLAND

SURF'S UP: Grimaldi's pizza shop on Surf Ave. is open for business again. Economic recovery has been uneven in Coney Island in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

BY TIMOTHY BIDON

Coney Island's boardwalk, hit hard by Hurricane Sandy at the end of last October, is bustling again. Opposite the Stillwell Avenue subway station, Surf Avenue is now home to a brand new Applebee's restaurant and an It's Sugar candy store. Summer visitors are pouring into Luna Park, Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park and the New York Aquarium, and on blistering-hot weekends Coney Island's fabled beach is packed. But just a few blocks north and west, in the residential parts of the neighborhood, recovery is barely under way.

"We've been doing everything on the up-and-up for 20 years," said Jane Parmel, who runs a party-planning business at the corner of West 15th St. and Mermaid Avenue. She lost \$150,000 in equipment and supplies to

the storm's rising waters. "In those 20 years I've employed over 100 people, and I can get nothing back from the city that I've paid taxes to."

Around the corner from Parmel, Magda Perez has received one \$15,000 loan from the Small Business Administration. Perez and her husband Sabino Eugenio, a retired butcher, opened Mermaid Prime Meats last October with a the hope of providing groceries at affordable prices to their fellow Coney Islanders, more than a third of whom rely on food stamps. In order to use food stamps in a business, that business must have an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card swipe machine, which is provided by New York State in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In the wake of Sandy damage, the state has stalled on providing Perez with a machine, which has caused her business to dwindle. Now, the

Perez and her husband struggle to keep their shelves stocked. Many other businesses in the area have fared worse, remaining shuttered because they could get neither direct assistance nor loans.

"Right now there are so many dead zones where there are no banks or supermarkets," said Perez, a 45-year resident of Coney Island. "Before the storm there were local stores where you'd run in and get what you need, now you have to go out of your way."

New York City has funneled \$72 million in federal recovery money to small businesses. But according to its Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), that money is just a fraction of what's needed: Hurricane Sandy's floodwaters covered an area with more than 18,000 businesses that employed at least 200,000 workers.

Working through the NYCEDC, a powerful, quasi-governmental entity dominated

by mayoral appointees, the Bloomberg administration is preparing to channel a total of \$90 million in federal recovery funds into five storm-impacted areas of the city. The initiative, known as the Neighborhood Game-Changer Investment Competition, covers the shorelines of southern Manhattan, southern and eastern Staten Island, the Brooklyn-Queens Waterfront, southern Queens and southern Brooklyn, which includes Coney Island.

However, struggling small business owners like Parmel and Perez need not apply. According to its website, the NYCEDC has requested proposals for "transformational projects" that will leverage significant additional private investment for large development projects.

Elizabeth Bird of the watchdog group Good Jobs New York has been following the Game-Changer competition and the

1895→

«1895» Coney Island becomes a popular amusement destination for New Yorkers with the opening of Sea Lion Park, the first amusement park in the area. The same year, the iconic Steeplechase Park opens.

«1903» Luna Park is the only amusement park in Coney Island that retains its name today, but its beginnings stretch back to the turn of the 20th century.

«1916» Nathan's Famous hot dog restaurant opens near the boardwalk. Nathan's will go on to be a national franchise and a household name with its Independence Day hot dog eating contest being watched across the country.

«1920» Coney Island becomes more accessible to the average New Yorker as subway service is extended to Stillwell Avenue, and now amusement seekers can enjoy the new, hot dog eating contest being watched across the country.

«1927» Coney Island becomes a "high thrill" amusement park as the Cyclone roller coaster opens. The Cyclone remains in operation to this day, thrilling generations of New Yorkers.

«1940s & 50s» Robert Moses begins his slum clearance crusade, pushing low-income families to Coney Island to live in high-rise housing projects. A significant portion of Coney Island residents still live in public housing.

2013→

«1966» Real estate developer Fred Trump (father of Donald Trump) razes Steeplechase Park to the dismay of many and replaces amusements with high-rise apartments.

«1981» Coney Island sees its first Mermaid Parade. It now draws thousands of tourists to the boardwalk.

«2005» The Bloomberg administration reveals its development plans for Coney Island as developer Joe Sitt quietly buys up parcels of land in the area, evicting many longtime amusement operators.

«2009» Following years of gridlock, the city and Sitt finally strike a deal and development plans for Coney Island can be set into motion.

«2012» Hurricane Sandy devastates Coney Island.

«2013» Coney Island's boardwalk sees a surge of tourists and new businesses, complete with new chain stores such as Applebee's and It's Sugar, while businesses on Mermaid Avenue struggle to re-open.

status of post-Sandy small business loans closely. “This kind of competition is clearly aimed at the big players,” she said. “It certainly doesn’t take into account, at least on the outside, what the needs are of the community base, [of] businesses that are already there.”

POOR MAN’S RIVIERA

Once known as the “Poor Man’s Riviera,” Coney Island has been a popular summer destination for working-class New Yorkers for more than a century. At the end of World War II, public works czar Robert Moses built thousands of units of public housing in Coney Island. Moses used the area as a dumping ground for residents displaced by the massive “urban renewal” projects he was carrying out in other parts of the city. Today, Coney Island has a year-round population of about 50,000 people and a median household income of \$32,000, compared to the citywide median of \$49,000.

In Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s New York, where waterfront development is booming and maximizing real-estate industry profits is close to a sacred cause, many see Coney Island as an underperforming asset in need of a dramatic facelift.

“Bloomberg believes that the future of this city is attracting more people with money, building a luxury city, a city for wealthy people,” said Tom Angotti, professor of urban affairs at Hunter College and author of *New York for Sale: Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate*. “Economic development is all about bringing money in.”

Visions of a Coney Island makeover have

danced in city planners’ eyes for the past decade. Working through the Coney Island Development Corporation, the Bloomberg administration announced in 2005 a plan for a “mixed-use” development that would include a new year-round amusement park for “world-class” operators and 4,500 units of new housing, more than 80 percent of which would be sold or rented at market rate. However, Brooklyn real-estate speculator and shopping-mall developer Joseph Sitt was quietly snapping up prime parcels of land. By 2005 he held much of the best real estate along Surf Avenue, from the Brooklyn Cyclones’ minor-league baseball stadium to the Cyclone roller coaster.

Sitt used his ownership to evict many amusement operators in the area, touting ever-changing plans for luxury hotels, a \$1.5 billion “Las Vegas-style” resort along the beach, and even a blimp service that would provide aerial tours of the city while broadcasting: “THE BOARDWALK AT CONEY ISLAND.” At the same time, he demanded that the city allow him to build giant condominium towers on the south side of Surf Avenue, right up on the beach.

After years of gridlock, Sitt and Bloomberg struck a deal in 2009. The city purchased 6.9 acres of Sitt’s land east of Stillwell Avenue for \$95.6 million so it could move forward with building the new amusement district. The city paid approximately \$320 per square foot of land, a price comparable with property in central Manhattan. Sitt is free to build high-rise hotels and boutique shopping centers on his remaining land west of Stillwell Avenue.

DISASTER CAPITALISM

With change already coming to Coney Island, Hurricane Sandy may turn out to be a boon for developers.

If the NYCEDC doles out any of its Game-Changer money to Coney Island (which seems quite possible, given how hard Bloomberg has fought to put his stamp on its future), those funds will almost certainly be used to further advance the city’s redevelopment plans there. Meanwhile, as storm-battered businesses like those of Jane Parmel and Magda Perez wither, their demise could clear the ground for further gentrification. After all, if developers are able to repopulate a commercial corridor like Mermaid Avenue with trendier, more upscale shops and businesses, moving to Coney Island would become that much more attractive to the affluent market-rate renters the city hopes to draw to the area.

For Angotti, it’s an example of “disaster capitalism” in action — a concept familiar to many New Orleanians in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. “Sandy was, and is for the disaster capitalists, an opportunity,” he said.

But this “opportunity” excludes those who already inhabit Coney Island. And with a lack of transparency on the part of the city, the neighborhood’s year-round residents and business owners are left in the dark about their futures. “They fixed the boardwalk,” said Perez. “But what’s happening with the rest of the community? We need to know: where’s the rest of the money going?”



AISLE STAY HERE: Magda Perez (right) and her husband Sabino Eugenio have struggled to keep their store on Mermaid Avenue open.

WE CAN HELP! THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD ARE COLLECTING CASH AND SENDING 100% TO THE N.G.W.F.

THE NATIONAL GARMENT WORKERS FEDERATION IS THE UNION IN BANGLADESH. BEFORE THEY STARTED THE A/S/W, THE PAY WAS \$10 A MONTH. 2 BIG STRIKES RAISED THE PAY UP TO \$40 A MONTH. IF YOU CAN DONATE \$10 IT COUNTS IN A BIG WAY!

SEND DONATIONS TO: UPSTATE N.Y. IWW P.O. Box 235 ALBANY, NY 12201-0235

THANKS! Make checks to IWW write NGWF on the memo line

This ad was not paid for with any money collected for the NGWF. This was paid for by individual IWW members.

Law and Disorder radio

WBAI 99.5 FM

Mondays at 9am

DOWNLOAD PODCASTS at lawanddisorder.org

“Our basic constitutional rights are in jeopardy. “Law and Disorder” is an excellent magazine format radio show, hosted by progressive lawyers who analyze the state of civil rights in this post-9/11 period. From attacks on Muslims at home to torture abroad, “Law and Disorder” puts these constitutional attacks into perspective.”

—AMY GOODMAN, HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!

Hosted by movement lawyers Heidi Boghosian, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild; Michael Ratner, President, Center for Constitutional Rights; Michael Smith, New York City attorney and author

Now on Facebook.com

Mayor's Race

By STEVEN WISHNIA

Michael Bloomberg's 12 years as mayor have been very good for some classes of New Yorkers. Luxury housing is popping up all over the city, and the Yankees and Mets have gleaming new stadi-

ums where getting a hot dog, French fries and an only-16-ounce soda costs more than the concession-stand worker makes in an hour. But what about the people who aren't benefiting from Pharaoh Bloomberg's efforts to turn New York City into Dubai-on-the-Hudson? On September 10, voters in the Democratic

primary will choose among eight candidates. The five who have held major political offices are Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, Comptroller John Liu, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, former Comptroller Bill Thompson, and former Rep. Anthony Weiner. Also in the race are former City Councilmember Sal

BILL DE BLASIO

JOHN LIU

CHRISTINE QUINN

BILL THOMPSON

HOUSING

Everyone knows that "the rent is too damn high." The five leading candidates all promise to build more "affordable" housing and support repealing the state law that prevents the city from strengthening its rent regulations. On the other hand, all except John Liu have taken substantial contributions from the real-estate lobby.

- Created "Worst Landlords Watch List" website as public advocate
- Would use city pension funds and a tax on vacant lots to finance housing construction



- Supports extending rent controls to commercial spaces
- Supports mandatory inclusionary zoning in exchange for letting developers construct taller buildings
- Says rents in affordable housing should be based on the median income for each borough instead of on the metropolitan area's
- Opposes Bloomberg plan for "infill" luxury development in public housing projects

- Most outspoken on strengthening rent regulation
- Got bill for stricter code enforcement through City Council
- Has taken the most money from real-estate interests, and supported massive luxury development in her district
- Promises to build 40,000 new middle-income apartments

- Would finance new affordable housing with tax breaks
- Leading recipient of money from the Real Estate Board of New York, a lobby for the city's big developers



NYPD

Crime has dropped dramatically since the crack epidemic of the late '80s and early '90s. But under Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, cops have stopped and frisked millions of innocent young black and Latino men without probable cause, trampled the civil rights of protesters and led the nation in petty marijuana arrests, again mostly of young black and Latino men.

- Would appoint an inspector general to oversee the Police Department and replace Kelly as police commissioner
- Would treat possession of marijuana found by police searches as a violation, not a misdemeanor
- Would increase number of surveillance cameras in high-crime areas in the outer boroughs
- Would expand alternatives to incarceration for those involved in the criminal justice system

- Would abolish stop-and-frisk, says it's "almost like some Third World dictatorship"
- Would replace Kelly — and other top police chiefs



- Would keep Kelly as police commissioner
- Would create a separate system within the courts for trying 16- and 17-year-olds
- Supports having an inspector general for police, as long as it does "not pose any kind of threat to the authority of the mayor or the police commissioner"
- Suggested that Zuccotti Park should be put under city jurisdiction — which would have made it easier to evict Occupy protesters

- Says stop-and-frisk is an important tool, but current policy "all but requires our police officers to treat young black and Latino men with suspicion"
- Would replace Kelly
- Would put inspector general within the Police Department
- Would hire 2,000 new cops

EDUCATION

New York City has some of the best public schools in the nation. But thousands of students drop out of high school or graduate marginally literate. Mayor Bloomberg's answer has been to test, test and test while blaming teachers for failures and pushing charter schools and privatization.

- Would raise taxes on people making over \$500,000 to fund pre-kindergarten and expand after-school programs
- Supports moratorium on charter schools "co-locating" in public school buildings; would charge them rent
- Wants more funding for arts education, but won't say how much
- Says lowering class size is a top priority

- Criticizes the city's high-school admissions system as "unfair and deeply flawed"
- Would charge charter schools rent for co-locating in public-school buildings
- Wants program for businesses and tech companies to donate old and refurbished computers to students
- Wants free CUNY tuition for the top 10 percent of city public high-school graduates

- Would replace textbooks with e-books
- Says charging charter schools rent would destroy them



- Supports expanding "our city's many extraordinary charter schools"
- Would stop Bloomberg's school closings
- Wants more funding for arts education, but won't say how much
- Accuses Bloomberg of "demonizing" teachers

LABOR

If New York City were a country, it would be one of the most economically unequal in the world, as thousands of people work for less than \$10 an hour. City workers haven't gotten a raise in years, as all the 152 labor unions that represent them are working under expired contracts — so the next mayor will have to decide whether to give them retroactive increases. Bloomberg has also increased outsourcing of city services, such as taking 311 calls.

- Supports \$11.50 minimum wage for workers on city contracts, but says citywide minimum should be \$9
- Says he'll be a tougher negotiator because he's "unburdened by the support of the municipal labor unions"
- Says he's "not opposed to the concept of retroactivity"
- Accuses Bloomberg of "practicing union-busting with a velvet glove in the form of privatizing and contracting out"

- Wants to raise city minimum wage to \$11.50
- Worked against city outsourcing jobs done by public employees
- Supports retroactive pay increases for some city employees
- Says Bloomberg should have worked out contracts "a long time ago"

- Blocked paid-sick-days and living-wage bills until they were watered down
- Got an exemption for the Related Companies in living-wage bill
- Led City Council in overriding Bloomberg's veto of a bill banning outsourcing jobs that city workers could do more cheaply
- Won't say if she supports retroactive pay, because she doesn't want to "negotiate contracts in the press."

- Supports \$9 minimum wage
- Says city workers can't afford to pay more for health care, but he's "not going to negotiate contracts in public"
- Will not say if he supports retroactive pay
- Says Bloomberg is "outsourcing for outsourcing's sake," and city workers should be trained to do those jobs

DID YOU KNOW?

- Says economic inequality is creating "a tale of two cities"
- Arrested protesting the planned closing of Brooklyn's Long Island College Hospital
- Bloomberg surrogate charges that he'd bring the city back to the 1970s

- The only candidate not to take significant sums from real-estate lobby — and the only one to have campaign-finance scandal so far; city denied him matching funds after two staffers were convicted
- Helped to uncover more than \$500 million in fraud by CityTime, the private company to which Bloomberg outsourced computerizing the city's payroll

- Inflicted four more years of Michael Bloomberg on us, by ramming the temporary repeal of term limits though the City Council in 2009
- Wrote the law banning smoking in bars
- In 2012, walked off stage at a rally protesting Bloomberg's veto of a living-wage bill when a heckler called the mayor "Pharaoh"

- Almost upset Bloomberg in 2009, despite his \$9 million campaign being outspent by \$100 million
- Says more than 70 percent of New Yorkers "have felt ignored for 20 years," under Bloomberg and Rudolph Giuliani
- Backed by former Republican Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, who says he "doesn't frighten business"

Albanese, political comedian Randy Credico, and minister Erick Salgado, with Credico and arguably Albanese significantly to the left of the top five.

Here’s a summary of the top five’s records and positions on key issues.

ANTHONY WEINER

- Still defends his 1994 vote to deregulate vacant apartments
- Introduced City Council bill to let landlords “self-certify” that they’ve corrected violations
- Seems to think that the city Rent Guidelines Board is a state agency
- Would require developers getting tax credits for low-income housing in the “80-20 program” to include 20 percent for people making \$36,000-\$78,000 a year.

- Would have police take DNA samples from people arrested, “as many as practicable”
- Would require beat cops to wear cameras and put cameras in every subway station



DONDI J

- Would give kids Kindles to replace textbooks
- Would pay “master teachers” more for moving to troubled schools
- Would let teachers give up pensions in exchange for higher salaries
- Would make it easier for schools to expel kids

- Says city workers “have to start paying” for more of their health-care costs, especially if they smoke
- Wants to “create an industry/education initiative via CUNY” to encourage corporations to set up call centers here
- Would ask unions to help set up vocational programs in schools
- Says minimum wage should be increased, but it’s state’s responsibility

- Loud supporter of single-payer health care in Washington, but proposes much narrower plan for city
- Voted for Iraq War, says Israel is not occupying the West Bank
- “Carlos Danger” was more effective at persuading women to have cybersex than Anthony Weiner was at getting other legislators to work with him



DAVE SANDERS

In the Mayor’s Race, Labor Endorses Division

DISUNION: The labor unions that represent 1.3 million NYC workers have failed to coalesce around a candidate or shared platform in this year’s mayoral election. Public sector workers rallied outside City Hall on June 12 (above).

BY ARI PAUL

Most of the leading Democratic candidates for New York City mayor can honestly brag about having the backing of labor. Comptroller John Liu has District Council 37, the large public-sector confederation, on his side, along with several building trades groups, even though he noted that public unions shouldn’t expect full retroactive pay on new contracts settled under his administration. The United Federation of Teachers and Teamsters Local 237 soon undermined Liu’s public-sector support by backing his predecessor Bill Thompson, who vows not to seek higher taxes on the wealthy. He also has the backing of several cop unions, which is no surprise, considering he has the most of NYPD-friendly platform of the bunch.

To the annoyance of anyone who sees Christine Quinn as a surrogate for outgoing Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ (representing building workers like door people, custodians and security guards) and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union tapped the same City Council Speaker who impeded the sick days and living wage bills until they were stripped of real power. To demonstrate how cynically deferential to government power a union as large as 32BJ is that it can’t stick to its principles of worker justice, consider this Tweet from NY1’s Courtney Gross: “Asked about sick leave if 32BJ would support [Quinn] if she didn’t move it forward, 32BJ says ‘we would have had to look at that.’”

The bigger SEIU affiliate — 1199, also known as United Healthcare Workers East — is backing Public Advocate and former Hillary Clinton campaign manager Bill de Blasio, who has spent four years as the city’s official ombudsman staking out carefully vague non-positions on issues like stop-and-frisk.

SHORT-TERM THINKING

Division among unions in an election is, in large part, to be expected. Unions tend not to choose a major candidate based on a general economic record, but on what specific and short-term policy promises a candidate makes to a particular membership. But an inability for labor to change that mentality in an election where New York could have its first Democratic mayor in two decades, and create a more general political movement shows just how ineffective they are even in New York City, where labor has 1.3 million members and still actually retains some power in a country where organized labor is more or less decimated.

This, of course, isn’t the message a union’s president or its public relations representatives will tell any one, and it wasn’t the message at the June 12 rally outside City Hall, where the elected chieftains of the city’s public sector unions voiced anger at Bloomberg for stalling contract negotiations for three years and demanded that the next mayor offer a fair raise and protections of benefits for city workers. (Full disclosure: This writer has an editing job for a DC 37 affiliate, Local 371, though it has remained neutral in the race.)

That demand doesn’t have much salience if each candidate looks at the sea of members and knows that it does not represent a real united front. And the consequences of that disunity are widespread. At a June meeting of labor journalists in New York City, the question came up of why labor hasn’t created think tanks and media organs to counter-balance entities like the Manhattan Institute. One answer, in response specifically to the failed attempt to create a new union-backed think tank in the city, posited that unions “don’t speak the same language,” a reference to the minute policy differences that divide them.

LEARNING FROM BUSINESS

It was a sad response because the business community doesn’t suffer from this. The res-

taurateur, the financier and the construction magnate all have different direct needs and concerns on an operational level, but they are in general agreement on what they want (to make money) and what they don’t want (regulations and strong unions that could increase costs). That’s why they are able to have entities like the Manhattan Institute that pump out anti-union reports and op-ed pieces.

Is uniting people on the left on general economic issues actually impossible? People are learning that such consensus is not out of reach. Anyone who spent any amount of time at Zuccotti Park in the fall of 2011 can tell you that was one of the few places one could find a squatter punk with facial tattoos, a stroller pushing Park Slope resident and a transit worker agreeing that the blame for the economic crisis rests with Wall Street and its representatives in government.

MYOPIC UNION LEADERS

The real problem, many at the meeting agreed, is that labor leaders aren’t interested in being a part of any entity they can’t control. And sadly, a unified labor agenda that transcends short-term policy goals is something no leader could ever single-handedly control. By the same token, getting the unions to unite behind a single candidate weakens the link between any individual union leader and that candidate.

This is not to say that unified political organizing during a campaign season is the ultimate goal of the city labor movement, but campaign season is the perfect moment for unions to attempt building consensus because it is a time when, for better or for worse, the rank-and-file is generally paying attention to the same issue. If anyone from the Occupy Wall Street movement is still wondering why the labor movement never came out as a united force in support, the fragmentation of unions during this election helps explains why.

Putting It All On the (Pipe)line

HOW THE NATIONAL FRACKING DEBATE IS PLAYING OUT IN NEW YORK CITY

BY EMILY MASTERS

Clare Donohue spent her teenage years growing up in the Catskill Mountains hamlet of Roscoe where water was central to the area's way of life. Her family often fished at a nearby reservoir and so many fly fishers liked to visit the spot where two pristine rivers converged that Roscoe dubbed itself "Trout Town USA."

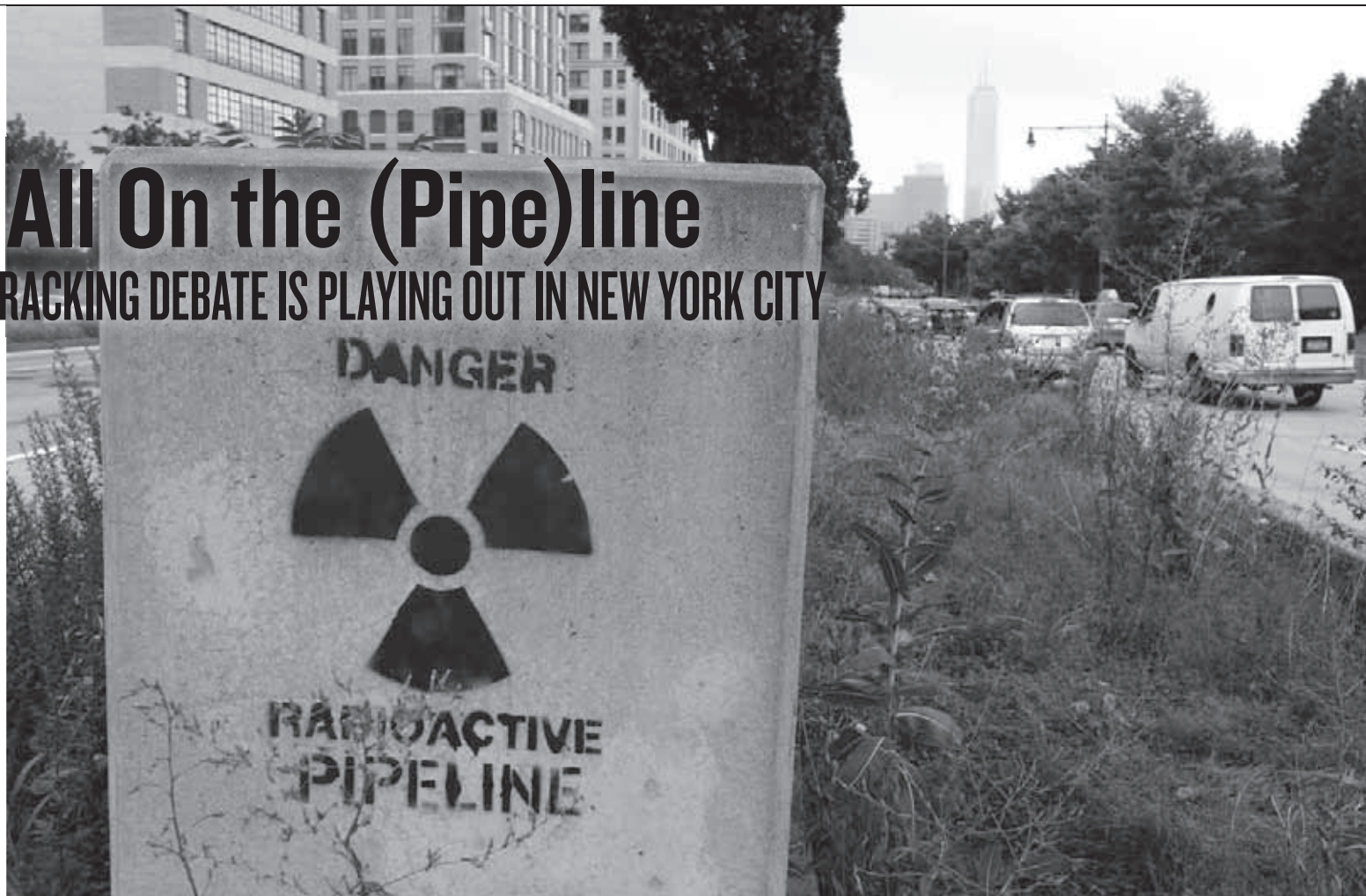
"When you walked into the house," Donohue recalled, "the first thing you did was go to the sink and fill a glass of water. It was so delicious."

Donohue, 52, runs a small business and has lived in New York City for the past 30 years. When she learned from friends three years ago that 85 well sites had been leased for future drilling for natural gas in a village close to Roscoe, she was concerned. She watched *Gasland*, Josh Fox's Oscar-nominated documentary, and later joined friends at a West Village community board meeting. There, officials from Spectra Energy sought to mollify local concerns about an underground natural gas pipeline that the company was bringing into the neighborhood.

"I just sat there unbelieving, because everybody was just calm and polite and they were all asking questions like whether the cement in the sidewalk would be put back the way it was, things that I thought were totally irrelevant in terms of the disaster that was being described. And I kept thinking, 'What is wrong here? Why aren't people screaming?'"

Donohue has been raising her voice ever since as a co-founder of the Sane Energy Project, which she helped start with a dozen other activists to fight the Spectra pipeline. The group's focus has since broadened as they confront a growing web of projects that could drive a surge in New York City's use of natural gas obtained by fracking. In addition to Spectra, a second pipeline is slated to enter via the Rockaways and go up Brooklyn's Flatbush Avenue. There is also a deep water liquefied natural gas import terminal proposed for off the coast of Long Island.

New Yorkers currently consume 1.3 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas. And these new infrastructure projects would increase that by between 16 and 30 percent, according



TIMOTHY KRAUSE

NEIGHBORHOOD MENACE: (Above) The Spectra pipeline snakes along the West Side Highway toward its terminus on Gansevoort Street. Scheduled to come online in November, the pipeline will bring in fracked natural gas from Pennsylvania.

to a study commissioned by the mayor's office.

"It is a strategy to hook the city on fracked gas," said Occupy the Pipeline activist Patrick Robbins.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, requires injecting millions of gallons of water laced with an array of toxic chemicals deep into the earth to cause fissures that allow drillers to tap previously unreachable deposits of natural gas. The technology has been blamed for poisoning underground drinking water supplies in areas near well sites.

Large parts of central and southern New York State sit atop the Marcellus Shale, a geological formation that is believed to contain large reserves of natural gas. While activists have won a moratorium against fracking in New York and are fighting for a full ban, Pennsylvania landowners have seen a fracking boom in the past decade, especially as smaller operators have been gobbled up by transnational companies. These corporations, owning large acreage and seeking fast profits, drive the push for increased drilling.

While natural gas is heralded as a cleaner-burning "bridge fuel" to a renewable energy future, it is in fact a potent greenhouse gas. When released directly into the atmosphere, it traps 72 times more heat than carbon dioxide and remains 25 times as powerful as carbon dioxide after a century in the air.

CREATING A NEW MARKET

With natural gas prices at a low and billions of

dollars sunk into drill sites, the natural gas industry is looking for a way to increase demand, boost profits and garner more financial backers. Through that lens, New York City, a huge energy consumer, presents a golden opportunity.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's 2011 mandate to convert the boilers in New York City buildings to the "cleanest fuels" has set the stage for skyrocketing demand as many buildings switch to natural gas systems. The new heating oil regulations will ban the two dirtiest heating fuels available: Number 6 and Number 4. These heavy fuels create fine soot, known as particulate matter, which is highly polluting. Soot exacerbates asthma, irritates lungs and increases the risk of heart attacks and premature death.

The regulations will require New Yorkers to instead heat their buildings with either ultra-low sulfur Number 2 oil, biodiesel, natural gas or steam, according to PlaNYC.

The trouble, Donohue said, is that natural gas also produces particulate matter and at a higher rate than Number 2. In comparison, biofuel produces zero emissions and zero particulate matter. And while converting an average New York City building to biodiesel and Number 2 oil costs about \$10,000 to \$30,000, natural gas conversions can start at \$500,000, a cost often transferred from landlord to ten-

ant through rent hikes.

PIPELINES AND PLAYGROUNDS

In the midst of the infrastructure growth, Hudson River Park may be getting a new addition: the Spectra pipeline. It will snake through New Jersey before coming on shore next to a children's playground in the densely populated West Village.

"To know about it is to be against it," said Robbins, who has worked with the Cooper Union Institute for Sustainable Design.

The pipeline is being built by Spectra Energy, a Fortune 500 company operating 19,000 miles of natural gas pipelines in the United States and Canada. This project is slated to feed into both Consolidated Edison (ConEd) and National Grid utility lines starting in November, supplying fracked gas with dangerously high radon levels from the Marcellus Shale to unknowing New York customers (see sidebar).

Explosions are another potential health risk from the Spectra pipeline, since pressurized methane gas "has a habit of exploding," Donohue said. The Spectra pipeline will have similar size and pressure as the San Bruno, CA pipeline, which blew up in 2010 due to a faulty welding job. The explosion killed eight people and destroyed 38 suburban homes.

"If you translate that kind of destruction into the West Village, it is insane," Donohue said. "In New York, you blow up the pipeline, then you blow up the cars, then you blow up

PIPING RADIATION INTO OUR HOMES

When natural gas is pumped into the city, it may bring along an unwelcome visitor: radon.

Colorless, odorless and tasteless, radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. It is produced from the natural radioactive decay of uranium, which is found in rocks and soil and is dislodged during the fracking process. Radon is estimated to cause the deaths of 21,000 Americans per year from lung cancer.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there is no known threshold below which radon exposures are risk free.

Still, the WHO and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which has also identified radon as a significant health risk, have named levels of radiation that can be inhaled at what they describe as a low risk for cancer.

The EPA says exposure to 4 or more indoor units of radiation is dangerous. For the WHO, the magic number is 2.7 units. How does

this scientific dispute play out in the homes of New York City residents?

There actually is a history of natural gas seeping into the ambient air of NYC. An occupational hazard, you might say, that comes from lacing the city with a maze of natural gas pipes, some of which date back to the 1800s. However, Clare Donohue of Citizen Radon Watch and the Sane Energy Project said the presence of methane gas in the air we breathe now is not as harmful as it could be.

Radon has a half life of three and a half days. Most of the gas the city currently uses comes from the Gulf Coast, a traditional drilling site with low levels of radon. It takes five to six days to be piped here, and has 1 - 2 units of radiation upon arrival: a minor health risk.

Meanwhile, the Marcellus Shale, the natural gas industry's rising star, represents a high-radon area. Researchers have found the Marcellus Shale's radon level to be about 150 to 160 units. After its quick transport, totaling 15 to 20 hours, it could still have a radon

level of 125 when it hits New York City.

That's 121 units over the EPA's estimate for safe indoor radiation.

Currently there is no government regulation of the radon levels present in consumer natural gas. With the help of the Sane Energy Project, New York State Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal (D-Manhattan) has introduced a bill (A6863) to change that. The bill would designate and monitor acceptable radon levels for gas at the distribution point. To date, the measure remains bottled up in committee.

"They [the natural gas industry] say there is no problem with the gas coming from the Marcellus Shale," commented Patrick Robbins of Occupy the Pipeline. "This legislation says, prove it."

—EMILY MASTERS

the boilers, it is explosion, explosion, explosion.”

Occupy the Pipeline has decried Spectra Energy’s “dismal safety record,” pointing to 17 safety violations by Spectra in 2011, millions of dollars in fines and a string of toxic chemical spills, leaks and explosions.

Donohue dismisses federal pipeline regulations as laughable, with barely any oversight from regulators who often go on to take jobs with industry. “There are 2.5 million miles of pipeline in the country currently. There are only 88 inspectors for those pipelines,” she said, or one for every 28,410 miles of pipeline.

According to a *ProPublica* investigation, only 7 percent of natural gas pipelines nationwide are inspected regularly.

“RUBBER STAMP MACHINE”

The main agency that approves applications, issues permits and regulates pipelines is the Federal Environmental Regulation Commission (FERC), an organization activists have entirely lost confidence in.

“The FERC is a rubber stamp machine,” Robbins said.

Donohue wrote to FERC to say it should approve renewable energy projects, not pipelines, only to be surprised by their response: that renewable energy projects did not fit the need of the applicant, aka the company, and therefore were not considered.

“They are basically saying, ‘We can’t not allow this to be built just because the public doesn’t want it. The needs of the corporation are greater,’” Donohue said.

And she was not alone in her criticisms. During Spectra’s application process, there was an open public comment period in which 5,000 comments were lodged against the pipeline and only 20 in support of it. FERC still approved the Spectra permit.

On average, the pipeline application process takes about two and a half years. Soon, however, that could speed up. A bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-KS) which would streamline an application period to just one year.

“If you are a community that is just living your life — you’ve never fought a pipeline before, you don’t know anything about the system — you have get up to speed on these

highly technical documents and convoluted processes, but it is basically impossible to do that in a year’s time,” Donohue said. “It makes it so much harder for the citizenry to comment and participate in these kinds of projects.”

ROCKAWAY LATERAL

One community that has not had its voice heard yet is the wildlife of the Rockaways, as another pipeline may slice through a national park, a bird sanctuary and an endangered species nesting area.

The pipeline, called the Rockaway Lateral, is an expansion of the Transco pipeline, built by energy infrastructure giant Williams. The Transco line brings gas both from the Gulf of Mexico and the Marcellus Shale to the New York City area.

The pipeline has been segmented off into project pieces by Williams. One section will cross Jamaica Bay and Riis Beach, while another will cross Gateway National Park and connect in Brooklyn under Flatbush Avenue. A third segment will connect to a metering station in Gateway National Park.

Segmentation is a particularly helpful move for skirting around regulatory oversight. The most controversial section, the Brooklyn Queens Interconnect, being built by National Grid, will span the environmentally sensitive Jamaica Bay and Gateway National Park. It is not considered an interstate pipeline and thus is only subject to New York City environmental review, dodging scrutiny from congressional, state and federal regulatory bodies as well as the public.

“There is something fishy about [that],” said Robbins, who is concerned about the heightened risk of radon exposure, explosions and methane gas leakage. “We are curious as to why they would go to such lengths to have that section in particular avoiding oversight.”

IMPORTS & EXPORTS

Close by off the shore of Long Island are the deep waters that could become the home to the Port Ambrose liquified natural gas (LNG) import terminal. Originally proposed for a site 16 miles offshore from Asbury Park, the terminal would have involved the construc-

Continued on next page



DIRECT ACTION: George Pigeon, 27, of Occupy the Pipeline is arrested last October at the West Village construction site of the Spectra pipeline after chaining himself to an excavator.

ERIC WALTON



DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG

TUNE IN

NYC RADIO

WBAI 99.5FM 8am M-F

NYC TELEVISION

CUNY-TV

6:30pm M-F, 1am Tu-F

Manhattan MNN

8am and 7pm M-F

Brooklyn BCAT

9am M-F

DISH Network & DirecTV

Free Speech TV

8am, noon, 8pm

and midnight M-F

8am, noon, 7pm Sat

8am, noon Sun

Link TV

11am and 6pm M-F



**DEMOCRACY
NOW!**



**FREE
BRADLEY**
bradleymanning.org

(Pipe)line

Continued from previous page

tion of a 50-mile sea floor pipeline that would have moved up to 2.4 billion cubic feet of re-gasified fuel offloaded by tankers at the terminal, according to the Asbury Park Press. Instead, Gov. Chris Christie vetoed the plan twice.

Now Liberty Natural Gas is trying to win approval again, this time for a terminal off the coast of Long Beach, NY. The new location interferes with the intended position of the New York Power Authority's Long Island-New York City Offshore Wind Project.

The terminal's stated purpose is to import natural gas from the Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago to the New York City market. Critics of the terminal are skeptical, since the boom in domestic natural gas production has significantly reduced the demand for imported natural gas while a switch from import to export terminal could fuel more fracking in the Marcellus Shale.

The debate over the Port Ambrose project comes at a time when the U.S. government is moving to loosen long-standing prohibitions against the export of natural gas. Michael Klare, author of *The Race for What's Left: The Global Scramble for the World's Last Resources*, told *The Independent* that

converting a LNG import/export terminal would be prohibitively expensive and would draw the ire of domestic manufacturers who benefit from reduced energy prices. But with the price per thousand cubic feet of natural gas running between \$3-4 in the United States and \$16-17 in Japan, the incentive to sell abroad persists.

"The price incentives are there and the technology is there," Robbins noted. "All we have is the assurance of the contractors."

A DIFFERENT DIRECTION

According to the International Energy Agency, worldwide investment in new fossil fuel extraction and processing will total an estimated \$22.87 trillion between 2012 and 2035 while investment in renewables, hydropower and nuclear energy will amount to only \$7.32 trillion.

Much of that fossil fuel investment will go toward pursuing unconventional energy sources like the natural gas that is obtained

by fracking.

Faced with similarly misguided patterns of investment here in New York, activists like Donohue and Robbins see building an energy system based on renewables such as wind, water and solar as key to derailing the fracking juggernaut. They realize that we are in a race against time before the current infrastructure buildout locks New Yorkers into another generation of dirty fuels. And now they can point to a study released earlier this year by Stanford researcher Mark Z. Jacobson showing how New York State could run entirely on renewable energy by 2030 and create 58,000 permanent jobs in

the process.

Under the Jacobson plan, everything from giant offshore wind turbines to residential rooftop photovoltaic systems would help power New York. Altogether, 40 percent of the state's energy would come from local wind power, 38 percent from local solar and the remainder from a combination of hydroelectric, geothermal, tidal and wave energy.

"The technology is there. It's a question of political will," Robbins said.

For more information, see sanenergyproject.org or occupythepipeline.com



EARTH DEMONS: The Naked Green People gather at the Spectra construction site last October. They painted themselves fluorescent green to underscore the risks of increased levels of radon that will accompany fracked gas from the Marcellus Shale.

JOHN P. DUFFY

Current events and social justice issues written by kids, for kids



indykids!

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE KIDS



Journalism Workshop for Kids

Does your child or student love to write? Come be a part of the IndyKids reporting team! The next series of Kid Reporter workshops in NYC will be held on September 14, 21, 28 and October 5, 2013.

Resources for Educators

Download free teaching guides and order a classroom subscription to utilize IndyKids with your students.

Learn more at IndyKids.org

"This paper gives kids a voice."

Read and Subscribe
at IndyKids.org

A Hunger for Justice

BY ELLEN DAVIDSON

The hunger strike at Guantánamo Bay prison passed the six-month mark in early August, with more than 50 prisoners still participating. Meanwhile, a hunger strike at Pelican Bay Prison in California for improved conditions, including an end to long-term solitary confinement, reached one month on August 8.

At Guantánamo, nearly 40 prisoners are still being force-fed daily, a practice that the United Nations calls torture and the American Medical Association deems against medical ethics.

Organizing in solidarity with both hunger strikes has stepped up this summer. On June 26, 18 activists were arrested at the White House, including CODEPINK cofounder Diane Wilson, who capped off a 58-day water-only solidarity fast by climbing over the White House fence in order to demand that President Barack Obama make good on his campaign promise to close the prison at Guantánamo. She faces up to six months in prison for unlawful entry. Currently two people are on a long-term fast — Cynthia Papermaster of CODEPINK and Andrés

Thomas Conteris of closegitmo.net.

Two others ended their hunger strikes on August 4 at a mosque in Albany, NY, joining with that community for the daily *iftar* meal that ends the sunrise-to-sunset fast during the holy month of Ramadan. Former Veterans For Peace President Elliott Adams and VFP board member Tarak Kauff had been taking in less than 300 calories, Adams for 80 days and Kauff for 58.

“The men at Guantánamo and Pelican Bay have undertaken a hunger strike because their situation has become so unbearable they are willing to do without one of the few things they have in life that are precious, which is food,” said Kauff.

He was among six people arrested inside the Hart Senate Building in Washington, D.C. on July 30 after a simulated force-feeding by members of CODEPINK outside the building. Seven activists carried posters with photos of prisoners from Pelican Bay and Guantánamo and spoke from the balconies overlooking the large atrium, telling prisoners’ stories in the first person and demanding freedom for the 86 men in Guantánamo who have been cleared for release and an end to all long-term solitary confinement



ELLEN DAVIDSON

GITMO REDUX: Tighe Barry and Gael Murphy of CODEPINK simulate a forced nasal feeding of a Guantánamo hunger striker on July 30 in Washington, D.C.

in U.S. prisons. On any given day, some 80,000-90,000 inmates in the United States are in solitary confinement, including some as young as 13 years old.

“What is happening in this country is completely wrong,” said Margaret Flowers, an organizer with popularresistance.org who was also arrested. “It goes against

medical advice; it goes against moral advice; it goes against U.N. conventions. We should not put children into jail at all. In particular they should not be put into solitary confinement. ... It ruins their lives.”

For more information, see closegitmo.net.

Bradley Manning's Top 10 Revelations

BY JUAN COLE

On July 30, 25-year-old WikiLeaks whistleblower Bradley Manning was found guilty of most of the almost two dozen charges filed against him by U.S. military prosecutors. The most serious charge against him — aiding the enemy — was dismissed, but Manning still faces up to 90 years in prison on counts that include espionage (despite the lack of evidence for intent to spy and the lack of evidence that his leaking ever did any real harm).

That his 2010 disclosure of hundreds of thousands of U.S. government documents changed the world is undeniable. Here are 10 of the most significant revelations they contained:

1. Manning revealed the *Collateral Murder* video of a helicopter attack in Iraq on mostly unarmed noncombatants (though some of those struck may have been armed), including two Reuters journalists — whose cameras were taken for weapons — and children. The army maintains that the video does not show wrongdoing, but the killing of unarmed journalists is a war crime, and the callousness of the soldiers talking in the video gives an idea of what was going on in Iraq during the years of the U.S. occupation. When the Bush administration asked the Iraqi parliament for permission to keep a base in the country, the parliamentarians refused. The U.S. military was forced to withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011.
2. Manning exposed the full extent of the corruption of Tunisian dictator Zine

El Abidine Ben Ali, adding fuel to the youth protest movement of late 2010, which translated the relevant U.S. cables into Arabic. Manning contributed to the outbreak of powerful youth movements demanding more democratic governance in the Arab world.

3. Manning revealed to the U.S. and Yemeni publics the secret drone war that Washington was waging in that country. That the cables show then-dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh acquiescing to the U.S. strikes on his country probably played into the movement to remove him as president, which succeeded in early 2012.
4. He revealed that then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ordered U.S. diplomats to spy on their United Nations counterparts. The U.N. spy requests included cables that demanded intelligence on U.N. leadership, foreshadowing later revelations of extensive U.S. spying on allies like Germany via the NSA.
5. His leaks showed that then-Senator John Kerry pressed Israel to be open to returning the Golan Heights to Syria as part of a peace negotiation. This item suggests that Kerry might be more of an honest broker in the current negotiations than some observers give him credit for.
6. Manning exposed overwhelming corruption in the Afghan government. This degree of corruption, which has shaken the whole banking system and caused U.S. funds to be massively misused, is still a factor in deciding whether to

stay in Afghanistan in some capacity after December 2014. The U.S. public is in a better position to judge the issue with these documents available.

7. Manning showed the degree of authoritarianism and corruption of the Egyptian government of Hosni Mubarak, which was subsequently swept away.
8. Manning revealed that hard-nosed realist and former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was against striking Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities because it would slow their program down only slightly, but would inevitably cause Iranians to be angry and mobilized in the aftermath.
9. Manning revealed that Israeli authorities had a secret plan to keep the Palestinian population of Gaza on the brink of food insecurity and poor health, in one of the creepiest military operations in history; one State Department cable read, “Israeli officials have confirmed to Embassy officials on multiple occasions that they intend to keep the Gazan economy functioning at the lowest level possible consistent with avoiding a humanitarian crisis.”
10. Manning's act of courage encouraged hackers to leak the emails of Bashar al-Assad and his wife, showing their jewelry purchases in Europe and gilded lifestyle while al-Assad's artillery was pounding Homs and other cities with no regard for the lives of noncombatants. In fact, Manning inspired numerous leakers, including some who blew the whistle on PLO corruption and willingness to give

away most of Jerusalem to Israel, and, likely, Edward Snowden, who revealed to us that our government has us all under surveillance.

Juan Cole is a professor of history at the University of Michigan. An earlier version of this article was published on the author's blog, [Informed Comment](http://InformedComment.com), at JuanCole.com.

PRISON ON A TIMESHARE PLAN

With Bradley Manning facing up to 90 years in prison, thousands of his supporters from around the world are asking to be able to serve part of his sentence. As *The Independent* went to press, more than 3,900 people had signed an online petition at Credoaction.com urging the U.S. Army general who oversaw Manning's military trial to allow them to do some of Manning's hard time. Manning is waiting to be sentenced by a military judge for his role in providing hundreds of thousands of documents to the WikiLeaks.org website.

“I'm 77 years old on Social Insecurity and I can do a year's time for my brother,” wrote one petition signer. Said another, “We are a nation of cowards if we allow him to shoulder the soulless wrath alone ... Though difficult to imagine, I would shoulder 1-3 months of Bradley Manning's time if guaranteed he would not have to serve it.”

— JOHN TARLETON

For more, see org.credoaction.com/petitions/how-much-time-would-you-serve-for-bradley-manning

THE INDEPENDENT'S WHISTLEBLOWER POSTER SERIES

This is the second in a series of four posters featuring whistleblowers who have taken great risks to expose the crimes and the misdeeds of our government.

- July (Issue #188).....Edward Snowden
- August (Issue #189).....John Kiriakou
- September (Issue #190).....JesseLyn Radaack
- October (Issue #191).....Bradley Manning



JOHN KIRIAKOU

DATE OF BIRTH
August 9, 1964

HOMETOWN
New Castle, Pennsylvania

CAREER

Kiriakou served in the CIA from 1990 to 2004 as an analyst and a case officer. Following 9/11, he became the CIA's chief of counterterrorism operations in Pakistan and led raids that captured a number of Al-Qaeda fighters. Kiriakou went on to work as a counterterrorism consultant for ABC News and serve as a senior investigator for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

WHAT HE LEAKED

In a 2007 interview with ABC News, Kiriakou became the first member of the CIA to publicly acknowledge that the agency was waterboarding prisoners and that this torture was officially sanctioned by the U.S. government.

KIRIAKOU IN HIS OWN WORDS

"My case was about torture. The CIA never forgave me for exposing the torture program and saying it was U.S. government policy."

RETALIATION

Kiriakou was charged in 2012 with three counts of espionage and one count of violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act (IIPA) for having provided the name of a former CIA colleague to a journalist who never published it, as well as one count of making false statements to the CIA Publications Review Board.

LEGAL STATUS

Facing up to 45 years in prison and soaring legal expenses that have left him almost \$1 million in debt, Kiriakou pled guilty to one count of violating the IIPA. He began serving a 30-month federal prison sentence on Feb. 28, 2013.

FAMILY

Wife Heather, sons Max (8) and Charlie (19 months) and daughter Kate (6); two other children from a prior marriage.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TORTURERS?

No CIA employees have been charged with crimes for their role in the agency's use of torture in the so-called War on Terror. Top CIA officials who ordered the 2005 destruction of 92 videotapes depicting prisoner abuse by the agency have also avoided prosecution for obstruction of justice despite flouting a court order — leaving Kiriakou as the only American to go to prison over torture.

PRISON ADDRESS

John Kiriakou 79637-083
Federal Correctional Institution
Loretto

P.O. Box 1000

Loretto, PA 15940

Kiriakou is permitted to receive mail from anyone, and soft-cover books and magazines only from individuals.

ON THE WEB

www.defendjohnk.com
Kiriakou's prison letters are being published at www.firedoglake.com

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY IS MORE FUN



A game for the new economy, learn more at CoopolyGame.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

TUES, AUG 27 • 6:00pm

BLACK AUGUST FILM FESTIVAL

Broken on All Sides: Race, Mass Incarceration, & New Visions for Criminal Justice in the U.S.

Directed by Matthew Pillischer, panel on criminal justice to follow.

Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

SAT, AUG 24

3:00pm–9:00pm

DISSIDENT ARTS FESTIVAL

An annual event showcasing the work of progressive artists across a variety of platforms. This year's festival is dedicated to Trayvon Martin. Featuring Roy Campbell, Inconspicuous Meeting, Steve Dalachinsky, Randy Credico, Tesla Colis, Sosala, The Red Microphone, Obi Kaye, Sana Shabazz, The Dissident Arts Orchestra & others

Admission: \$15

**THE BRECHT
FORUM**

BUILDING
A MOVEMENT
THAT MOVES
451 West Street
(btwn Bank and Bethune)

**Please
register online:
brechtforum.org
212-242-4201**

CAPITALISM

Austerity & Agony Worsen in Greece

BY COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS

Oops, we did it again. That's essentially what the International Monetary Fund has to say in a June report acknowledging the grave mistakes it, the European Commission and the European Central Bank made in 2010 when they insisted on a savage austerity program as a condition for loans that allowed Greece to continue servicing its debt to European banks. While the stated expectation of the IMF, EU and ECB troika was that their program would only lead to a short recession that would quickly allow Greece to return to global financial markets, three years later austerity has led to a deep economic depression, with socially catastrophic consequences and the Greek debt as unmanageable as ever.

Greece is not a unique case. The IMF has a history of belatedly recognizing its errors when the structural adjustment programs it imposes on needy countries prove to be as economically counterproductive as they are socially devastating. The failures of the IMF's models speak to a broader breakdown of mainstream economics, with its faith in capitalist markets and their supposedly benign effects. The neo-classical tradition that dominates mainstream economics has long devoted itself to proving, through abstract mathematical reasoning, Adam Smith's claims that the invisible hand of the market turns self-interested actions of individuals into socially beneficial outcomes.

MAKE-BELIEVE ECONOMICS

According to neoclassical economists, the problem facing individuals and entire economies is that of scarcity. Since people's material desires exceed the resources available, such scarce resources have to be used efficiently. In other words, they should be used to maximize production of goods and services as well as the satisfaction that consumers derive from such production. The beauty of capitalism supposedly lies in the disciplining effect of market competition, which makes minimal waste and an orientation to the desires of consumers the condition of profitability and market success.

This fictional account underlies the deregulatory policies imposed around the world in the last four decades. To the extent that they contributed to the global financial and economic crisis that has bedeviled the world for the last five years, these policies (and their disastrous effects) dramatize the extent to which mainstream economics functions as an ideological cheerleader for pro-free market policies that have dramatically increased inequality and thrust millions of people into unemployment and destitution.

Apart from illustrating the IMF's failures, Greece is also a prime example of capitalism's inability to use scarce resources efficiently and in ways that promote human well-being and ecological

sustainability. Indeed, with an unemployment rate of almost 30 percent for the general population and over 60 percent for young workers, Greece underlines the magnitude of the economic dysfunction produced by capitalism's boom-and-bust cycles. Apart from causing waste and inefficiency, skyrocketing levels of unemployment (which are not unique to Greece) are also a great source of human suffering, as they increase poverty, hunger, suicide, drug addiction and a multitude of other social problems that are destroying the lives of millions of people in Southern Europe and, indeed, the world.

Greece also illustrates the ecological damage wrought by capitalism. As the government has tried to raise revenue by taxing heating fuel, for example, Greeks have turned to burning wood, triggering deforestation and air pollution in all the major cities. Meanwhile, unemployment is used as a justification for ecocidal investments, such as the Canadian Eldorado corporation's extraction of gold in one of the most pristine areas of northern part Greece.

UNDEMOCRATIC

These disastrous consequences for humans and the environment ultimately stem from capitalism's fundamentally undemocratic nature. Being as much a system of power as it is a system of markets, capitalism allows small economic elites to determine, through their profit-maximizing decisions, the future of entire societies, our planet and the human species. Indeed, capitalists have historically used the profits derived from the work of the rest of us to build a toxic consumerist culture that does more to wreck the planet than to advance human well-being and happiness; they have corrupted democratic political systems

Continued on next page



ROB LAQUINTA

Egypt, Back to Square One

INTERVIEW BY ALINA MOGILYANSKAYA

In an outpouring sparked off by the Tamarrood, or “Rebellion,” campaign, unprecedented numbers of Egyptians took to the streets calling for an end to the presidency of Mohamed Morsi on June 30. The campaign, begun by five revolutionary youth, managed to garner 15 million signatures on a petition calling for Morsi to step down. Those youth found an unlikely partner in the military, which followed up on the massive protests by ousting Morsi, the country’s first democratically elected president. How did Egypt come to this point, and where is it going? Joel Beinin, professor of Middle East history at Stanford University and author of numerous books and publications, including the report Justice for All: The Struggle for Worker Rights in Egypt, shared his thoughts with The Independent.

ALINA MOGILYANSKAYA: *There were an enormous variety of people who came out onto the streets on June 30 to protest Mohamed Morsi’s presidency. What’s the connection between that and the thousands of protests that we’ve seen in the last year since his election?*

JOEL BEININ: I think there are two main issues. The first is socio-economic. There had been a very large number of strikes and protests by workers before Mubarak was ousted, and that continued and even escalated during the last two and a half years. We’re talking something like 1,169 worker protests in 2012 alone. The underlying reason is that the economic conditions of life in Egypt have become much more difficult: the price of food went up, there were fuel shortages, and so on. It seems that the army was actually responsible for the fuel shortages because as soon as Morsi was gone — presto! — there was enough gasoline and crude oil on the market.

The other force driving this is that there were very high hopes that Morsi’s government would implement some kind of democratic reforms, in the Ministry of the Interior, in the security forces, in the judiciary. But after the revolutionary thrust of democratizing public life in Egypt, it just didn’t happen. There was great disappointment with the Brothers over that.

AM: *After being elected with only 51.7 percent of the vote, Morsi failed to gather potential allies, including leftists and liberals, into*

a coalition. What does the landscape of the Left look like in Egypt?

JB: To be fair, the Left in Egypt is small, depending on how you define it. And most importantly, it doesn’t have any kind of a broad-based network among Egyptians of the popular classes — only the Muslim Brothers had that. Then there’s a whole range of liberals. Many of them are quite young and have only entered politics in the last several years. It’s important to remember that Egypt is coming off of 60 years of authoritarian rule in which no party, other than the party of the government and the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been persecuted for most of that time and only became legal after Mubarak was ousted, was able to nourish a national presence.

AM: *We’ve heard much about growth in independent trade unions since the January 25 revolution, as well as the Morsi government’s less-than-kind disposition toward them. What are your thoughts about the prospect of a real independent labor movement going forward?*

JB: There is a contradiction. On the one hand, there is tremendous energy at the base and among the rank-and-file, and it’s fueled by increasingly poor economic conditions and by a sense of liberation, that things are possible now that weren’t possible under the old regime. And that is still very much there and it is one of the important gains of the January 25 uprising, not only for workers but for Egyptians in general. On the other hand, the fact that the overwhelming majority of all worker actions are locally organized means that the workers don’t have a national political vehicle. So there’s not going to be a real workers’ party, there will be several parties that claim to speak for workers but they won’t, in fact, have broad worker support.

AM: *Before Morsi’s removal on July 3, Egypt was negotiating with the International Money Fund for a controversial \$4.8 billion loan to help stabilize its ailing economy. There’s also a World Bank program in the works. What will be the cost of these loans to the*



UNFINISHED REVOLUTION: After Egypt’s powerful military deposed the country’s democratically elected government on July 3, supporters of the coupe rallied afterwards in Tahrir Square (above).

average Egyptian?

JB: When the IMF and the World Bank talk about economic stability, they hardly say anything at all about the ability of the great majority of the people to live at a reasonable standard. The IMF money will mean reduction in government subsidies on fuel and bread, even as most other subsidies have already been reduced. It will mean further reductions in the already pitiful level of social services. It would mean that the gap between the rich and the poor will continue to grow, and that will fuel social unrest. So it’s not, even from the view of enlightened capitalism, a great policy.

AM: *You mention the growing gap between the rich and the poor. What does that say about the neoliberal project in Egypt? And what has happened to it since the January 25 Revolution?*

JB: Since 1991, the neoliberal project in Egypt was being implemented in a radical and rapid way, because there was no democratic restraint. Since the revolution, it’s been put into suspension. A lot of factories have been closed. New foreign capital has not come. Some previously nationalized companies that were privatized have been ordered by the courts to re-nationalize, but the Muslim Brothers are as committed to the neoliberal free market as Mubarak and his group were. There’s much more public consciousness that these things are a problem, but I’m not sure anybody has a clear political program for an alternative.

AM: *There’s been a reincarnation of a sort of Nasserite populist outlook. What concrete*

effects has it had on the lives of Egyptians? Or has it?

JB: It hasn’t had much of a concrete effect, but there has been a cultural and political revival of Nasser. Culturally, there’s a sense that ‘Oh, we’re going back to the good old nationalist age.’ Nasser’s rise to power in 1952 was a military coup like that of July 3, and it became a revolution even though it wasn’t a popularly driven one. But people’s standards of living did improve, the British were expelled, the Suez Canal was nationalized, Egypt became an important player in international politics. The Egyptians are, rightly, proud of these things. But they also, incorrectly I think, associate the army with them. And the army is more than happy to take credit because it gives them cover for what they’re doing now.

AM: *After all the abuses we’ve seen the military carry out, why do you think so many Egyptians are still willing to embrace it as an ally?*

JB: Frankly, this is a little by mystifying to me. After the military’s shooting at demonstrators, performing virginity tests, and the whole host of abuses that they’ve committed over the last two and a half years, there’s been no retraining, and no military officer has been brought to court and held responsible for the abuses that happened. Nothing! So how could they possibly have learned their lesson if they haven’t even been told that they did something wrong? Maybe one explanation is that it’s the only alternative. Since there isn’t a viable civilian political force other than the Muslim Brothers, this is all we’ve got.

Greece

Continued from previous page

and destroyed entire communities whenever profit considerations dictated leaving areas with higher wages and strong union and environmental protections for areas without such “obstacles” to maximize profitability.

In view of all this, it is not surprising, then, that the economic crisis unleashed upon Greece has also become a crisis of democracy. Indeed, the Greek government has surrendered its control over economic policy and the use of public revenues to the EU, ECB and the IMF and has increasingly relied on authoritarian measures to control popular re-

sistance to its destructive policies. Meanwhile, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, for years an insignificant fringe group, has in the past year become the third most popular party. This development is all the more remarkable and disturbing, given the immense suffering inflicted on Greece by the Nazi occupation of the early 1940s. Enjoying support from over 10 percent of the population in recent polls, Golden Dawn has risen by scapegoating immigrants for the Greek crisis and by using its Nazi-inspired paramilitary units to attack and terrorize not only immigrants but anyone who does not accept its reactionary message.

ANOTHER WAY

If capitalism’s failings are closely connected to the undemocratic way it organizes economic life, it follows that overcoming these failings requires an economic system that reflects the priorities of the many as opposed to the few. What is required, in other words, is economic democracy in all its different forms, from democratic worker-run enterprises to democratized government operations based on innovative practices, such as participatory budgeting.

Experiments in economic democracy can be found around the world, with Latin America, which faced the ravages and crisis of neoliberalism earlier than most, being an especially rich laboratory. It is not a surprise, then, that,

faced with a similar crisis, millions of Greeks are mounting similar struggles, creating anti-austerity political formations, building solidarity networks and experimenting with non-capitalist ways of organizing the workplace. It is important to learn from these struggles as capitalist austerity, and its intellectual justifications provided by many mainstream economists, is rapidly spreading from Greece to the rest of Europe, the United States and beyond.

Costas Panayotakis is an associate professor of sociology at the City University of New York and the author of Remaking Scarcity: From Capitalist Inefficiency to Economic Democracy (Pluto Press, 2011).

Life as a Target

THE RESURGENCE OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN POSTRACIAL AMERICA

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

August 5, 2013 — While writing this, I hear gunshots. Soon a police helicopter circles the Louis Armstrong Projects next door; its spotlight sweeps their rooftops like a submarine inspecting an ocean floor.

I turn off the lights so the shooter won't see me, move the curtain and study the roof where the gunfire echoed. There's no one there. Scanning the city beyond, I know mostly Black and Latino men are shooting or being shot.

Lightheaded with adrenaline, I close the curtain. In Bed-Stuy, the fear of violence never fades but throbs under the surface of everyday life. On my stoop, a young man was shot dead. His father sits there nearly every day, as if waiting for his son to return. Between the killings are random shots like tonight that send me peering through the window.

Many of our young men are like open barrels of kerosene. One wrong look or word and they ignite into a blind fury that ends with death in the streets. And we who knew them, raised them, are also at times scared of them. And our fear is being turned against us because a whole outside world is also scared of them.

Walking downstairs, I sit on the stoop, remembering how tense it gets during the annual block party when men from other neighborhoods show up drinking and smoking. Every year, a late-night fight breaks out and someone is thrown against the car and pummeled. The sad truth is that the way George Zimmerman profiled Trayvon Martin is the same way that many of us, men of color, profile each other.

When I see conservatives on Fox News say Black and Latino men should be profiled, I know the difference is they are simply afraid of them while we, people of color, who are their family and friends, are also scared for them. We knew them as children. We know they were born with targets on their backs and they've been hit from birth with abuse, neglect and racial slurs. And the buildup of pain finds its voice in the flash of a gun barrel. Each new crime means another Black or Latino face snarls under a headline of violence, which adds to the social prejudice that deepens their segregation, which creates more poverty, which becomes more crime, which feeds again the great fear. We are trapped in a cycle of violence.

Sitting on the stoop, I watch the police helicopter circle above. Its light sweeps the buildings, a small circle of visibility, searching in the darkness.

THE MANY TRAYVONS

February 26, 2012 — Neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman studied a young Black man wearing a hoodie in the rain, strolling through a Florida gated community. He called the police, who told him not to follow the young man. In the 911 call released

later, a man can be heard screaming, "Help," and then a gunshot.

Trayvon Martin lay bleeding in the grass. He was 17 years old. He was visiting his family in the gated community. He died with Skittles and an Arizona iced tea. He was young, Black and male; those three elements made him background noise in the daily toll of American violence. His family hired attorney Benjamin Crump and spread the news. On March 7 Reuters published a story: "Family of Florida Boy Killed by Neighborhood Watch Seeks Arrest." Rev. Al Sharpton took up the cause on his MSNBC show *PoliticsNation*. But what echoed in the minds of millions of people was the chilling scream for help, cut by a gunshot.

As media across the political spectrum reported his death, he multiplied into many Trayvons. Liberals and leftists saw him as a victim of racist profiling in which bigots project stereotypes onto people of color. It is common for minorities to be acutely aware of how the majority group sees us. Your life depends on it. Sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois called

it "Double-Consciousness"; it is, he writes, "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."

The image we see is the Ghetto Brute — an animalistic man of color who targets helpless whites. Life inside this image is dangerous. One can act on it in bitter pride or wear a safe mask for others even if it means not recognizing yourself in the mirror.

And the Ghetto Brute image lands harder the further down we are in class and the browner we are in skin tone. In a nation of 313 million people are 39 million African-Americans. Of them, 10 million live in poverty. Those of us born too dark or too poor live under the weight of a stigma that shapes us from birth. It's why we rallied in the hundreds at Union Square for a Million Hoodie March, saying in unity, "I am Trayvon!"

He was a symbol for us because like Sean Bell or Amadou Diallo, both innocent, both killed by the NYPD, Martin's death gave us

a sharp contrast between his innocence and the violence that killed him. It made visible the injustices we daily endure. Sharpton said on *PoliticsNation*, "To many in the African-American community the killing of that teenager is emblematic of a grossly unjust system, of a thousand unequal steps, from stop and frisk to disproportionate drug laws to racially motivated sentencing."

On the other side, conservatives saw Martin as a tragic victim of justified profiling. Zimmerman's perception was not, they say, caused by bigotry but the pathologies of Black culture itself that creates high crime rates and hence the association of young, Black men with criminality. A few said Blacks are animals that must be segregated. Whether one explained the source of the crime as Black pathology or biological inferiority, the blame



was displaced from Zimmerman onto Martin and by extension onto Black America in its entirety.

The need to prove that Martin's murder was justified profiling drove Fox News, *National Review* and the Nazi site *Stormfront* to "blacken" Martin by critiquing his clothes and teen posturing. The day after the Million Hoodie March, Fox News pundit Geraldo Rivera blamed Martin's choice of wearing a hoodie: "When you see a kid walking down the street, particularly a dark skinned kid ... what's the instant association? It's those crime scene surveillance tapes, every time you see someone sticking up a 7/11 it's a kid in a hoodie."

Right-wing sites released photos of Martin smiling with a gold grill. Other photos showed him giving the finger, exhaling a mouthful of what could be pot smoke. His Twitter account, @NO LIMIT NIGGA, had bawdy adolescent rambling like, "Hahaha hoe you got used to yo loose ass pussy! Tighten up! #Literally!"

In March 2012, *Twitchy.com* used a photo assumed to be Martin standing with shorts sagging, flipping off the camera. It was not Martin but another Florida teen. They issued an apology but on *Stormfront* a forum member said, "Glad he's gone. One less welfare monkey breeding."

The goal was to make Martin look like a young Ghetto Brute who'd commit real crime, implying it was good that he was removed now. This violent suspicion comes from a "Security Obsession" that sees life as "survival of the fittest," in which a political or racial majority must protect its purity and culture against encroaching minorities. It sees the Other as irredeemably different, unable to assimilate and ultimately a threat.

It is a long tradition of fear that has scarred history. We see this mindset in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* when he writes, "In every mingling of Aryan blood with that of lower peoples the result was the end of the cultured people" or Pat Buchanan's *The End of White America*, "Those who believe the rise to power of an Obama rainbow coalition of peoples of color means the whites who helped to engineer it will steer it are deluding themselves. The whites may discover what it is like to ride in the back of the bus."

The Security Obsession is translated into street-level racism by people like Sgt. Ron King of the Port Canaveral Police Department, who offered his colleagues "Trayvon Martin" paper shooting targets. It showed a dark hoodie, its sleeve holding Skittles and Arizona iced tea. They declined to use it. He was fired. But when a local reporter contacted the seller, he emailed, "The response is overwhelming. I sold out in 2 days."

Of course before the liberal or conservative image of Trayvon Martin existed there was the young man, a real, living, human being. As the men at the shooting range fired bullet after bullet at the Martin target,

Sybrina Fulton, his mother, was in court listening to a man scream for help in a 911 recording, then a gunshot. She said, "That's my son."

THE RESURGENCE OF WHITE SUPREMACY

June 25, 2013 — A text beeped on my phone; it read, "Supreme Court just sent us back to the plantation." It linked to a breaking story: conservative justices struck down as unconstitutional Section 4b of the 1965 Civil Rights Act, which forced states with a history of discrimination to clear changes in voting rules with the Department of Justice.

Shaking my head, I imagined Republicans rubbing their hands with glee, thinking about the voter suppression techniques they'll use in the next election. They want to choke off democracy to the rising tide of voters of color who are part of the "coalition of the ascendant." Sixty-six million voters, mostly youth, minorities and college-educated whites, in particular women, enabled President Obama's second term. The resistance we get as the face of a changing nation is as old as the nation itself.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," Thomas Jefferson wrote, "that all men are created equal." As the ink dried on the Declaration of Independence, African slaves

THE HISTORY OF AMERICA IS THE GREAT CHURNING CONFLICT BETWEEN THE IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY AND THE PRACTICE OF RACISM, SEXISM, CLASSISM, EACH ONE DRIVEN BY CAPITALISM.

toiled in the fields of his plantation. It was a great contradiction to demand freedom but own slaves. The Founding Fathers resolved it by defining "Negroes" as not human. When independence was won, a deep line was drawn between citizen and Other, the former were propertied white males and the latter, poor white males, women and non-whites.

The history of America is the great churning conflict between the ideal of democracy and the practice of racism, sexism and classism, each one driven by capitalism. Eventually, states dropped property requirements and all white males could vote. But it was a "whiteness" seen most clearly against the backdrop of blackness.

The struggle between white supremacy and democracy waxed and waned. After the Civil War and Reconstruction, Black people pushed out of the South into the West, Midwest and North. In the cities, they pushed to integrate housing, work and public life. But one constant tool used by racists to stop progress was fear of Black men as criminals. In Thomas Dixon's 1905 book *The Clansman*, a rapist ex-slave Gus is on the prowl; it was remade into the 1915 film *Birth of a Nation*. Just the accusation of Black male criminality was enough to enrage Southern mobs to roast a man alive, cut his genitals

and take photos.

In each decade, people pushed across that line between citizen and Other. In response, conservatives held up the Black criminal to scare voters. The Ghetto Brute was in Nixon's 1968 Law and Order campaign, in female form during Reagan's 1976 campaign stump speech on welfare queens, in George Bush's 1988 Willie Horton campaign ad and in McCain's 2008 campaign painting Obama as a Muslim terrorist. Using Black criminal imagery, Republicans tried to dismantle welfare and the New Deal by portraying them as giving white taxpayer money to the undeserving poor, aka Black brutes, sambos and jezebels.

In the 21st century, the white majority is shrinking, its voting base split by class and gender. Working-class males lean Republican and women and college-educated whites go Democrat. The electorate is becoming more diverse, but we're reeling from the century and a half of fearmongering about Black criminals. Crime is the Republican code word for race, which is why we fight over Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell and the portrayal of Obama as a Muslim terrorist. And it's why we fight over Trayvon Martin. In stripping him of innocence, conservatives attacked us. In affirming his right to live, we safeguarded our own.

"Police are more cautious when approaching a black man," Bill O'Reilly said on his show. "Overwhelmingly violent crime is generated by young black men."

But a chorus of progressive writers pointed out that gun violence is down nearly 50 percent since the 1990s, most crime is intra-racial, next door and itself is the result of socio-economic pressure, not just race. The image of rampant Ghetto Brutes is not real, Black and Latino men are not attacking whites. The sad truth, I thought, is that we are killing each other. But many of us looked at President Obama and thought we were entering a postracial America, one that could help our youth, not criminalize them.

July 13, 2013 — A friend and I bought tickets to see Fruitvale Station, a film about Oscar Grant, a young Black man shot dead by an Oakland transit cop, when a text beeped on my cell phone. It read: George Zimmerman acquitted. Swaying on my feet, I stared at the text feeling rage and grief roll through me.

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

August 5, 2013 — Returning home, I tried to make sense of the Zimmerman verdict. Mass protests had dissolved. No social movement pushed ahead. Instead we're left with a conservative debate on "black-on-

black crime" as the legacy of Martin's murder.

Is "black-on-black crime" real? Yes it is. A *Huffington Post* report said, "Young black men are six times more likely to die from homicide than white men." Nothing new here. What is "black" about it? Don't poor whites kill each other too? Yes, but race is different from class. Racism locates the cause of social problems in the body and, in subtle and loud ways, we are taught to see ourselves as inferior.

Missing from Du Bois' definition of Double-Consciousness as "looking at one's self through the eyes of others" is the next phase, where one internalizes that gaze and sees others the way you were seen. Being hurt, we hurt each other. The blind fury of a male aiming a gun is the end of escalating stages of violence that begin when he first learns the weight of Blackness. It begins when he feels desperation in his mother's voice, when the word "nigga" is stapled to his skin and he becomes a moving target. It grows when he learns that his life is not worth much. And the life in commercials is one he can never live.

The violence of racism hits in a thousand unseen ways that add up to the "depressing clouds of inferiority" that Martin Luther King Jr. wrote about in *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. It becomes visible when I ask students of color if they made fun of or were made fun of because of dark skin color. Every time, nearly all of them raise their hands.

Above the warped racial identity is the economic, political and legal infrastructure that constricts life into narrow channels of opportunity. The budget-starved public schools, the endless stop-and-frisk, the unfair rates of arrest and high sentencing, the lack of jobs, the hypertension causing hearts to stop, the lack of healthcare, the constant media reflection of racist Hip-Hop caricature, the lack of gun control, our American machismo and materialism; it adds up into a grinding contradiction that explodes.

And that is why "black-on-black violence" is a symptom of white supremacy. Trayvon Martin and the young man killed on my stoop were both victims of the same system. The perpetrators were different, one a "white" Latino, the other a young Black male, but they aimed their guns at the same Ghetto Brute image, regardless of the fact that inside that image was a human being who was innocent.

Is this the blind spot of leftist ideology? Do we focus so much on privilege and top-down power dynamics that we miss how that same hierarchy is reflected among the oppressed? Is the true sign of white supremacy not just the Zimmermans but the youth of color who die each day, unknown, unnamed and unseen? As I tried to make sense of these questions, I heard from across the street, gunshots.

By ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN

Many of us have done a "Privilege Walk" at some point in our lives. The purpose of the walk is to expose the lifelong impact of privileges and 'normality' that we were either born into or born without. The exercise can very powerfully help identify all of the factors that were in place before we began making our own choices in life, factors that reinforce and widen gaps in resources and access to opportunities. The rules are simple. Everyone gathers behind a long horizontal line. When the facilitator reads a statement that applies to you, such as, "If your family owned the house where you grew up, or land of any description," you step forward; if it doesn't, you step back. Afterward, participants get to hear and process together the personal stories about how race, class, gender, and ability affected the opportunities of individuals in the room.

The traditional "Privilege Walk" exercise helps unveil the distance between those who have privilege and those who don't. That visible gap shows the work that must be done within the privileged group, but often still keeps the focus on privilege, relegating those who have less to the back. It can work well within a group whose goal is to center attention on privilege and begin to unpack the guilt of having been born with those advantages. The downside is that those without privilege, as in life, can end up coming in second.

Reconfiguring the "Privilege Walk" into the "Circle of Privilege" exercise was meant to help groups center their work

and energy on community building, and illustrate that everyone has a role in social change work. In this new exercise, everyone starts in a large circle, instead of behind a horizontal line, and those with the least access to power will take steps forward and end up at the center of the circle.

Those who are in the center at the end of this exercise are those who have been most impacted by inequality, and they should be on the frontlines of the work we do to create a better society and a safe and healthy planet. When it comes to human rights, or environmental and economic justice, these are the experts. Those further back may have more societal decision-making power and material resources, but they need the earned wisdom of those in the center to guide the work itself, and to determine where those resources should flow to promote deep, sustainable change. Both experiences are necessary, but currently the more privileged folks have a bigger influence over nonprofit work.

The goals of the exercise are twofold: firstly, to create an experiential map of oppression and privilege for the participating group as a reference point; and secondly, to give participants the experience of re-centering the impact of privilege in an effort to encourage new relationships of power and community.

THE EXERCISE:

Participants form a wide circle facing the center of a room (or any open space). A facilitator reads the following sentences while participants take steps forward and backward accordingly:

CHILDHOOD HOME:

- If you've ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step forward.
- If you've ever had to skip a meal, or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food while you were growing up, take one step forward.
- If one of your parents was unemployed or laid off, not by choice, take one step forward.

CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY:

- If you had to rely primarily on public transportation, take one step forward.
- If you were raised in an area where there was prostitution, drug activity or regular violence, take one step forward.

BIRTH PRIVILEGE:

- If your ancestors were forced to come to the U.S., not by choice, take one step forward.
- If your parents did not grow up in the U.S., take one step forward.

- If your primary ethnic identity is American, take one step back.

- If your parents were white-collar professionals — doctors, lawyers, etc. — take one step back.
- If there were people of a different race or class working in your household as servants, gardeners, etc., while you were growing up, take one step back.
- If your family owned the house where you grew up or land of any description, take one step back.
- If you were raised in a two-parent household, take one step back.

- If you lived in an area where you were able to play safely and unsupervised outside, take one step back.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

- If you saw members of your race, class, ethnic group, gender or sexual orientation portrayed on television in degrading roles, take one step forward.
- If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step back.
- If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step back.
- If you were told that you were beautiful, smart and capable by your parents, take one step back.
- If you were encouraged to attend college by your parents, take one step back.
- If you had access to an inspiring natural area, take one step back.

BEGINNING WORK:

- If you were paid less, treated unfairly or denied employment because of race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step forward.
- If you were ever offered a good job because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step back.
- If you were given the confidence or teaching to know how to work with your hands, take one step back.

BEYOND WORK:

- If you were ever afraid of, or the victim of, violence because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or ability, take one step forward.
- If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or ability, but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step forward.
- If a chronic health issue has limited your opportunities, take one step forward.

process? How often does one encounter spaces where access to resources and opportunity is honestly assessed and appropriately acknowledged? What would be different if people in communities most impacted by inequality were seen as the center of, or as experts on, their communities' needs and situations?

One of the final goals of the exercise is to gain awareness, and thus wisdom and responsibility, about how we use our privilege, even though no one creates the circumstances of their birth. These lessons apply in social justice work — which the exercise was originally developed to inform — as well as in a wide range of everyday situations. Invite and gather those in your life to try it!

None of these questions concern things within people's personal control. After the exercise is completed, the participants' arrangement in space represents a map of the social, political, economic and environmental circumstances into which people are born and reared. That physical display then allows for reflection: How did it feel to go through the

Adrienne Maree Brown was formerly the executive director of The Ruckus Society, a facilitator with the Detroit Food Justice Task Force and a cofounder of the League of Young Voters. An earlier version of this article appeared at WireTapMag.org under the headline "Tools for Activists: Turning Privilege Disparities into Just and Sustainable Action."

Take the Privilege Walk

Reclaiming a Forgotten History

The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights

WILLIAM P. JONES
W.W. NORTON & COMPANY (2013)

INTERVIEW BY JOHN TARLETON

The grainy, black-and-white newsreel images return each January. In them, the stocky black preacher with a sonorous voice stands confidently in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial and issues a thundering call for America to cast aside its racist past for a brighter future of interracial harmony in which all people are judged by “the content of their character, not the color of their skin.” Waves of applause sweep across the sun-splashed crowd of a quarter-million people as The Speech reaches its messianic climax. End of clip.

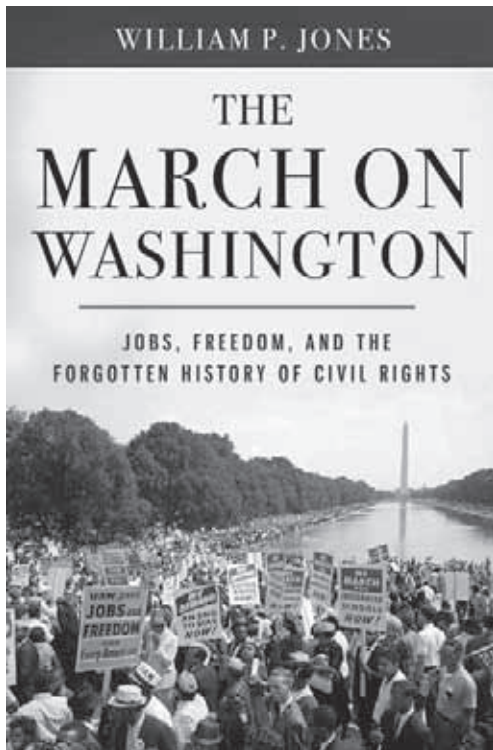
Snippets of Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech are etched in the minds of millions of Americans and the August 28, 1963, March on Washington is considered one of the most important protests in U.S. history. Yet, the origins of that day and the fullness of the demands of that massive crowd are little known. With the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington coming at the end of August, William P. Jones, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, has sought to fill that void.

JOHN TARLETON: *Your book eschews the typical narrative of the 1963 March on Washington as one sunny day where all these people showed up and heard a great speech. Why?*

WILLIAM JONES: That typical narrative is accurate. It’s just really incomplete. What I’ve tried to do is expand our understanding of the goals and the history behind the march. So the book really starts 20 years earlier with a previous march on Washington that was cancelled during World War II and traces the origins of the movement that many people saw for the first time, August 28, 1963, but had really long and deep roots in communities across the country.

JT: *The role of labor unions in the March on Washington is one in particular that is obscured. You explore that angle extensively.*

WJ: Part of the reason it’s obscured is the AFL-CIO, the primary labor federation itself, did not endorse the march. And that’s often been the way in which the story has been told. But what I found in my research was that labor leaders and union activists were really the initiators and the leaders of the march. Most of them were African-Americans. So they



had fallen out of that story.

The march itself was initiated by the Negro American Labor Council (NALC), which was a network of black union activists that numbered between 1,500 and several thousand black union activists in cities across the country. These were mostly elected local officials or staffers in local unions or union councils. And they were also often leaders of local civil rights organizations. They were extremely important people in their communities but they’re almost completely unknown at this point.

NALC was headed by A. Philip Randolph who had first called for a march on Washington in the 1940s. The leaders of NALC initially called the ’63 March on Washington to protest employment discrimination and call for more jobs. But they were convinced by other civil rights activists to expand their agenda, primarily to embrace the goals of the Southern civil rights movement, which were integration, access to public accommodations and public services and voting rights. And that’s where the slogan of the 1963 march for “Jobs and Freedom” comes from.

JT: *Talk about A. Philip Randolph. He exemplifies in many ways the forgotten history of the march.*

WJ: If you look at the media coverage of the ’63 march, Randolph was clearly recognized as the leader of the march. By then, he was 74 years old and had had a long life of political activism. He had moved to Harlem in 1911 from his hometown of Jacksonville, Florida, and quickly became involved in the socialist and trade union movements.

Randolph was known for two important things. One was his leadership of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, which was

the largest union led by African-Americans and one that he built from the ground up.

Randolph gained wider recognition among whites in 1941 when he threatened to organize 100,000 African-American workers to march on Washington as the United States prepared to support the Allies during World War II. He called off the march at the last minute when President Franklin Roosevelt issued an Executive Order banning employment discrimination by defense contractors during the war. Roosevelt’s order was fairly weak, and this set up a 20-year struggle that

culminated in the addition of Title VII to the 1964 Civil Rights Act on the basis of race, color, nationality, religion or sex.

JT: *Your book is a tribute to the persistence of the march’s organizers.*

WJ: One of the things I would like for people to take away from this story is the really long process of organizing and the importance of institutions like unions, civil rights organizations and black women’s clubs that were central to the ability to organize. To think people said, “Let’s just march on Washington” and a quarter-million people showed up does an injustice to the legacy of people who over the course of several decades built institutions that had networks in place to mobilize when the call for the march occurred.

JT: *What were the achievements of the ’63 march?*

WJ: The common story is that it shifted public opinion on racial equality, which is true but often exaggerated. There remained very strong opposition to integration not just in the South but in the North. You did see an important shift in opinion in the mainstream media and among moderate politicians, who came to recognize the power of the march and of the speeches. The most direct outcome of the march was the addition of Title VII to the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

JT: *Many gains have been made in the past 50 years. However, recent events*

from the Trayvon Martin verdict to conservative attacks on voting rights of people of color suggest that a lot of people in this country are still not reconciled to the idea of full equality under the law for everyone.

WJ: Today almost everybody will claim to believe in racial equality. But the real issue is how do we make sure that people are not discriminated against? Increasingly we’re seeing people move toward the position that the government shouldn’t have the power to enforce such laws and shouldn’t be involved in these matters. When you look at what it took to create a situation in which people had equal access to housing or jobs, then that retreat from enforcement power is what we really need to be concerned about.

JT: *Tens of thousands of protesters are expected to converge on Washington, DC, on Aug. 24 to mark the 50th anniversary of the ’63 march. Is it still possible for such a demonstration to have an impact on either public policy or the broader culture?*

WJ: One of the reasons the 1963 March on Washington had such power was that it was the first time people had tried this on such a large scale. Over time, it has become normal for groups with a grievance to march on Washington. One thing I’ve noticed with this mobilization is that it has depended on similar institutions that created the first march — unions and civil rights organizations. So while I don’t think this event has the potential to have the scale of impact that first March on Washington did, it looks like it might be a meaningful event.

A longer version of this interview appears at independent.org.



HISTORIAN: William P. Jones

bluestockings

radical bookstore | activist center | fair trade cafe

172 ALLEN ST • 212-777-6028
bluestockings.com

TUES AUG 20 • 7PM • FREE
ROADMAP TO APARTHEID: SCREENING WITH A Q&A WITH DIRECTOR ANA NOGUEIRA

Directors take a detailed look at the apartheid analogy commonly used to describe the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Narrated by Alice Walker, the film addresses why many Palestinians feel they are living in an apartheid system and why an increasing number of people around the world agree with them.

THURS SEPT 12 • 7PM • FREE
OR DOES IT EXPLODE?

Journalist Laura Gottesdiener will discuss her new book, *A Dream Foreclosed: Black America and the Fight for a Place to Call Home*. The ongoing economic crisis has created one of the longest and largest mass displacements in U.S. history, forcing more than ten million people from their homes.

FRI SEPT 20 • 7PM • \$20 PRE-SALE/\$25 DOOR

ROCK THE BELLES 2013
All women hip-hop show and fundraiser for Bluestockings. With live art, aerial and break dance, and silent auction. Featuring Rocky Rivera, Irie Eyez and Dj Roza; Awkwafina; Supreme; Ajo and hosted by Boog Brown. Tickets available at brownpapertickets.com/event/437086.

greyCediting

www.greycediting.com

ARE YOU WRITING TO CHANGE THE
WORLD?

MAKE SURE YOUR MESSAGE IS
CLEAR—LET GREY EDITING POLISH
YOUR BOOK, ARTICLE, OR WEBSITE.

WE SPECIALIZE IN SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL NONFICTION.

- DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING -

- COPY EDITING -

- PROOFREADING -

- INDEXING -

- COPYWRITING -

267-971-7654

SARAH@GREYEDITING.COM

FOLLOW US!

FACEBOOK: GREY EDITING

TWITTER: @GREYEDITING

Fighting the Landlords from Stuy-Town to Detroit

Other People's Money: Inside the Housing Crisis and the Demise of the Greatest Real Estate Deal Ever Made
CHARLES V. BAGLI
DUTTON (2013)

A Dream Foreclosed: Black America and the Fight for a Place to Call Home
LAURA GOTTESDIENER
ZUCCOTTI PARK PRESS (2013)

In October 2006, the real estate firm Tishman Speyer won the right to pay \$5.4 billion for the sprawling Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village complex on Manhattan's East Side, where more than 11,000 apartments — then mostly rent-stabilized — housed more than 25,000 residents. Add \$240 million in acquisition costs and \$650 million in reserve funds for contingencies and the total \$6.3 billion cost for the iconic near-waterfront property was the biggest residential fish ever landed. The price alone made it a trophy, and the bidding war that took place for the property offers a prime example of the Grand Casino temper that pervaded the real estate industry on the eve of the Great Recession.

The sale also illuminates the risks to existing tenants of a threatened conversion of affordable housing to market rates. On top of that, it underscores the dangerous absence of a sane national housing policy in a context where homelessness is rife and even middle-income renting tenants — the schoolteachers, nurses, police, firefighters, young families and the elderly who traditionally populated the complex — are at risk.

Within 18 months of the purchase, the complex's value had

plummeted by half and Tishman Speyer was paying more on mortgage repayment than it was receiving from rents. After eating through its reserve funds by January 2010, Tishman Speyer defaulted on the mortgage, making it the largest commercial mortgage default in U.S. history. It avoided bankruptcy by handing the complex to its creditors, and in the process, lost nothing.

As *New York Times* reporter Charles V. Bagli writes in *Other People's Money: Inside the Housing Crisis and the Demise of the Greatest Real Estate Deal Ever Made*, it was what the trade calls OPM, or other's people's money, that was lost, mostly in investments from pension funds that were then bundled and sold as mortgage-linked securities. With many mortgages shaky, these securities made for a toxic stew, and that practice nationwide fed the housing collapse and the onset of the Great Recession in late 2007. Bagli's book is key not only in charting the decline of middle-income housing in New York City, but also for laying bare how shabbily the real estate game is played and how socially irresponsible the players are.

The deal, as Bagli shows in detail in this example of the still-fresh utility of long-form journalism, could only have worked through another trade slogan: "aggressive management." That would mean evicting rent-subsidized tenants, who were ostensibly subletting illegally but were in many cases the legitimate renters, and turning the property into market-rate housing. Building towers on the green spaces, themselves among the complex's signatures, was another part of the plan.

But among the impediments to the grand scheme was a strong tenants association. Add to that the dubiousness of marketing the complex — which lacks doormen, and for the Stuyvesant Town component, two-bathroom apartments — as luxury rentals. It also presupposed no interruption in the then-booming housing market.

As Bagli writes, "Wall Street



NOT A DOORMAT: Community activists and Occupiers liberate a vacant, foreclosed home in East New York, Brooklyn on Dec. 6, 2011.

lenders were willing to lend 70, 80, even 90 percent of the property's value, making a bet that the real estate boom would continue. The change in approach on underwriting fueled a surge in prices. Why not? The mortgages quickly dropped off their balance sheets, after being combined with other loans into a security and sold to other investors. On the first day a new landlord took over [the complex] the rental income wouldn't even cover the debt service. But buyers, lenders and investors imagined that revenues would increase quickly in an ever-rising market."

When in October 2009, the state Court of Appeals ruled in a lawsuit initiated by the tenants that MetLife, the seller of the complex, and its new owners were double-dipping by charging market-rate rents for thousands of apartments while taking special tax breaks from a city housing program meant to keep rents affordable, Tishman Speyer walked away from the properties.

With the complex under new management and efforts by the tenants association to buy the property underway, the tenants are secure for the moment. However, the underlying problem of debt outstripping rental income remains.

While Bagli mostly focuses on the big players in the housing market, Laura Gottesdiener writes in *A Dream Foreclosed: Black America and the Fight for a Place to Call Home* about the grassroots side of it. Focusing on the epidemic of homelessness caused by the ruin of formerly stable low-income communities through foreclosures, evictions, gentrification and the leveling of public housing, she pays specific attention to four

families in Sanford, N.C., Chattanooga, Tenn., Detroit, Mich. and Chicago, Ill. The latter is the scene of a burgeoning anti-eviction movement.

While her case studies may seem different from Bagli's, the context is the same. Gottesdiener's is a wrenchingly effective and brilliantly informed tone poem — one only awaiting orchestration — about the consequences of the housing crisis on the poor, the psychic harm done to people without a home and the power that comes from fighting back. Where Bagli shows the systematic stupidity of those involved in the mammoth New York deal, Gottesdiener demonstrates the deceitfulness of the mortgage industry, its predatory lending practices and racial steering not only of property but of mortgage rates at a time when all levels of government are moving away from supporting — if not sabotaging — public housing.

Like Bagli's, Gottesdiener's book is thoroughly researched, including extensive interviews and use of material from the invaluable Center for Responsible Lending. Unlike Bagli, she focuses on the families themselves and how they transformed from being powerless in fraudulent system into acquiring agency and even becoming leaders in a series of fightbacks.

With all of their rich detail, neither book is obviously prescriptive. While Bagli portrays the tenants leaders and local officials — especially Councilmember Dan Garodnick, a lifelong Stuyvesant-Town Peter Cooper resident — as bullheadedly determined to give the tenants voice in any management decision, he leaves much of it at the level of voicing legitimate

tenant dissatisfaction, including the well-founded suspicion that any improvements in the property would come at their expense. His recounting of the failed attempt to make a tenant-backed counteroffer and the ongoing push of activists to effect legislation and enforcement of strong rent-regulation laws is rich in detail. Yet it's hard to find strategic lessons in his work, at least when the case is made so well that the impetus for the sale was in retrospect a kind of hubristic madness abetted by a feral political economy. In the best of circumstances, the sale's success was a long shot, which Bagli masterfully shows.

Gottesdiener, whose writing is informed by her commitments as an Occupy activist (the book is one of a handful of small works by the start-up Occupy-inspired Zuccotti Park Press) emphasizes "land reclamation" and direct action as the outcome of the work of those she profiles so well. She is better at imagining a just future in the corrupted present than in framing the mechanics of building those bridges to the future. These aren't necessarily weaknesses in books by authors who cover their topics so well. Both lay excellent groundwork for readers and are plainly key texts for anyone looking to understand why housing in the United States is in crisis today and will likely continue absent mass upsurges for housing justice. It's the strategic getting there that's the tricky part.

—MICHAEL HIRSCH

Michael Hirsch is a longtime labor and political writer and has been a resident of Stuyvesant Town for more than two decades.



BIG PICTURE: The bird's-eye-view of Stuyvesant Town from the Empire State Building.

Time to Take Out the Trash

Sanitation, or Off the Grid
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
CRYSTAL FIELD
MUSIC BY JOSEPH VERNON BANKS

SANITATION, OR OFF THE GRID IS BEING STAGED ACROSS THE CITY. HERE ARE THE REMAINING PERFORMANCES:

MANHATTAN:
Sunday, Aug. 18, 2pm
Central Park Bandshell, 72nd St. Crosswalk

Sunday, Sept. 8, 2pm
Washington Square Park

Saturday, Sept. 14, 7pm
Tompkins Square Park at E. 7th St. & Ave. A

Sunday, Sept. 15, 2pm
St. Marks Church, East 10th St. at 2nd Ave.

BROOKLYN:
Saturday, Aug. 24, 2pm
Sunset Park at 44th St. and 6th Ave.

QUEENS:
Sunday, Aug. 25, 2pm
Jackson Heights, Travers Park at 34th Ave. between 77th and 78th Sts.

STATEN ISLAND:
Saturday, Sept. 7, 2pm
Corporal Thompson Park, Broadway and Wayne St., West New Brighton

For more information, see theaterforanewcity.net.

In an era of runaway government and corporate power, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the news of one outrage or crisis after another. For Crystal Field of Theater for the New City (TNC), all the bad news is good news, or at least rich fodder for her latest play.

Sanitation, or Off the Grid is a musical farce that follows three New York City Sanitation Department workers who try to escape the endless trash of their job by saving up their vacation and sick days to go on a luxury cruise, only to encounter more garbage both literal and figurative. The production tours the five boroughs each weekend until September 15 (see infobox).

The play is the centerpiece of TNC's annual Summer Street Theater Tour. Its August 3 debut at an East Village block party was rained out, but the indoor space around the corner at TNC sufficed for the 30-person cast and an audience of more than 200. Laughter bounced off of the black box walls with such zinger lines as "trash doesn't seem as bad as the garbage in Washington" and pirates representing NSA workers taunting "Fee-fi-fo-fum I smell the blood of an activist."

The production satirizes almost every major news story from the past year. Topics include Superstorm Sandy, GMO food, the U.S. drone program, the Keystone XL pipeline and NSA snooping. Explaining why she used "Sanitation" in the show's title, Field told *The Independent*, "I think the worst thing about the current situation is that there is an effort afoot to sanitize our brains, i.e. remove all creative intelligence."

Field decided to create the main characters as city sanitation workers because she encounters them every day — they have their lunch room in the same building as TNC.



OUTLANDISH: (Above & below) *Sanitation, or Off the Grid* debuted Aug. 3 at Theater for the New City.

"They are very good neighbors, and I am always interested in writing city workers of one kind or another as my heroes," Field said. "I am hoping the audience will gain knowledge about the hard and sometimes courageous work that the sanitation workers do in and for our city."

Founded in 1971, TNC is a staple of political theater in the East Village. TNC has nurtured the talents of off-Broadway names such as Sam Shepard, Richard Foreman, and Moises Kaufman. The group aims to make theater accessible to the communities of New York.

The Street Theater Tour, now in its 37th year, is part of TCN's mission to create a dialogue about social change in New York. Each year the entire cast and crew, along with their 6-piece band, perform around the city, becoming a summer entertainment highlight for many communities.

"Street Theater is important in New York City because it brings the issues that everyone is thinking about to the forefront," Field said. "It supplants the media suppression of these issues, and it dramatizes the need to confront them."

—CASEY CLEVERLY



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER THEATER LISTINGS

FOURTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY SKETCHES OF YOUR LEFT HAND

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY
DUNCAN PFLASTER

When Blanca invites Paul to her ranch in New Mexico for the summer, he thinks it's for an artist's retreat, but it's also to help keep his gay bromantic college buddy Alonso, Blanca's brother, on his medication. Tormented painters, sexual obsession and crossed boundaries combine for a scorching new play. *Fourteen Hundred and Sixty* is part of the Unfringed Festival playing at The Secret Theater Aug. 15–Sept. 1.

Limited run:

Thursday, Aug. 22, 8pm
Saturday, Aug. 24, 4pm
Friday, Aug. 30, 9pm
Sunday, Sept. 1, 7pm show, 9pm festival party and awards ceremony
THE SECRET THEATRE
4402 23rd St., Long Island City
Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$18 at door; secrettheatre.com

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST HEMINGWAY

CO-CREATED BY JAMES RUTHERFORD AND ELLIOT B. QUICK
DIRECTED BY JAMES RUTHERFORD
Literature's most dazzling wit faces down its most red-blooded stoic in a trivial comedy about pain, lies, violence and vengeance. Set in Paris in 1926 with rugged Hemingway men in the roles of Jack and Algy, this mash-up of texts from Oscar Wilde and Ernest Hemingway outs the gay romance in Wilde's best-loved work; it collides with Hemingway's impossible

machismo, exposing both artists' desperate search for an ideal masculinity.

Aug. 17, 18, 20, 22–25, 29–31; Sept. 1, 8pm
ACCESS THEATER
380 Broadway (corner of White St.)
Tickets: \$15; see M-34.org

THE AWAKE

WRITTEN BY KEN URBAN
DIRECTED BY ADAM FITZGERALD
In Ken Urban's heart-stopping new play *The Awake*, dreams merge with reality as three strangers wake-up to find themselves at the mercy of a mysterious corporation — and realize they're connected to each other in more ways than they could have imagined.

Aug. 22–Sept. 8
Tuesday–Thursday at 7:30pm; Friday and Saturday at 8:30pm; Sunday at 3:30pm.
59E59 THEATERS
59 E. 59th St., between Madison and Park Aves.

Tickets: \$18 (\$12.60 for 59E59 members); call Ticket Central at 212-279-4200 or see 59e59.org.

NIGHT BLOOMING JASMINE

WRITTEN BY ISRAELA MARGALIT
DIRECTED BY ARTEM YATSUNOV

The desperate love story of a young Israeli war hero and a Palestinian woman is juxtaposed with the cultural clash between their families, the suspicion, prejudice and violence that permeates every corner of their lives. Thirteen years after its debut, the revised and updated *Night Blooming Jasmine* is timelier than ever.

Aug. 29–Sept. 15
UNDER ST. MARKS
94 St. Marks Place
Tickets: \$18 (\$15 students & seniors; \$15 group rate); call Smarttix at 212-868-4444.

—Listings provided by ROBERT GONYO and the Go See a Show! podcast, goseeshowpodcast.com.

Love, Politics & Footsy

BY DAVID MEADOW

Brooklyn-based singer-songwriters — even political Brooklyn-based singer-songwriters — constitute a crowded field. Jean Rohe, who grew up playing music with her family across her home state of New Jersey and has since taken her own rich blend of folk, jazz, Brazilian, and other musical forms across the country and internationally, stands out in that field with her rare tunesmithery, her occasionally goose bump-inducing lyrics and her sweet, deceptively gentle soprano. (Both in the melodies and in the way she enunciates the words, one can often hear glimmers of Joni Mitchell.) Although she's been well received with her band, Jean Rohe and the End of the World Show, she plays alone about equally often, and gave a wonderfully minimalist solo performance on August 3 at Le Poisson Rouge.

The set explored love, politics and impressions of nature and the city, inviting us into the minds of everyday people looking for a fleeting song under a street lamp or a roll in the hay with a charming rogue. (Here is where the lyrics sneak up on the listener. Despite Rohe's manner and delivery, which can be almost

humorously wholesome, she's not afraid to allow her narrators some adult straight-talk: apparently, the roll in the hay wasn't that great.)

Rohe's use of her go-to instrument, the guitar, is subtle. One might not have noticed the guitar line for most of the performance unless one was listening for it, but upon closer inspection it revealed a studied simplicity: a bass line rather than finger picking, a three-note pinch rather than a bigger chord. Rohe is, of course, past the clunky strumming of a greener player, but she also doesn't try to do too much with the instrument and get in her own way.

The real showstopper of the evening was "Footsy," a play-by-play account of two people — you guessed it — secretly rubbing and poking each other with their feet under a table. For this, Rohe put the guitar aside and accompanied herself on a traditional Brazilian *pandeiro*, a tambourine-like hand drum that really needs to be struck, and not just shaken, in order to jingle. To my ears, she nailed the elements of traditional samba percussion on that instrument: the rubber-bouncy pitch modulation that's achieved by digging the thumb into the drum skin

and quickly releasing the pressure as it's struck, and the particular syncopation with its ever-so-slight speed-up, slow-down, speed-up, slow-down that can't be notated visually, something like a cart with ever-so-slightly elliptical wheels. The beat itself was vigorous and sexy, and when Rohe dropped it to let her voice jump the precipice alone, her rock-steady internal metronome kept ticking with only a few exquisitely placed, super-off-beat claps on the drum to outline the contours of rhythm before the beat returned.

Rohe ended with a very powerful "message" song: her alternative national anthem, "Arise! Arise!" It can produce the aforementioned goose bumps if you're not careful, and she coaxed the audience into joining her on the chorus. (Look on YouTube for a handsomely filmed music video of her performing it, accompanied by a diverse "Citizen Choir," in Judson Memorial Church.) Rohe joked, optimistically, that this song, complete with its uncompromising references to botched illegal abortion, the cruelty of capital punishment, and ethnic cleansing by state and non-state actors, will replace our current national anthem around the



DAVID MEADOW

RARE TUNESMITHERY: Brooklyn-based singer-songwriter Jean Rohe during a recent performance in New York.

year 2030. God only knows where the country will be by then — but if Jean Rohe is still around, all is certainly not lost.

Jean Rohe will be playing at Rockwood Music Hall on Monday, August 19 at 9pm. For more see rockwoodmusichall.com.

The Sheriff's in Town

Protecting Capitalism Case by Case

BY ELIOT SPITZER

ROSETTA BOOKS, 2013

Former New York Governor and Attorney General Eliot Spitzer is attempting an audacious political comeback. In 2007 the self-styled "steamroller" arrived in the governor's office promising to reform a state government mired in scandals and ossified power structures (think three men in a room). Then, Spitzer got caught paying for sex and resigned from office in March 2008.

Everyone knows that story but this is only part of the reason his campaign for city comptroller is so brazen. As state attorney general from 1999–2006, Eliot Spitzer investigated, sued, fined and pissed off many of the biggest names on Wall Street. The specter of Spitzer overseeing some \$140 billion in city pension funds and using the money to leverage change in corporate structure infuriates Wall Street suits to say the least.

Spitzer's new book, *Protecting Capitalism Case by Case* details his past legal crusades and outlines his

vision for elected office. He is the scion of one of New York's wealthiest real estate families — an asset class whose desire for conservative steady returns clashes with Wall Street's quick buck casino capitalism. Protecting Capitalism directly confronts Big Finance's reckless gambling and crimes.

Spitzer writes that one of his first priorities as attorney general was to look into mortgage lending. What his office found was rampant fraud and interest rate manipulation in subprime mortgage lending. "And there was one more thing — one more, ugly, unmistakable, undeniable thing about his whole mess: These wildly overpriced, economically irrational loans were overwhelmingly sold to African-American and Latino homeowners."

As Spitzer's office delved into the fine print of subprime loans, it discovered that many subprime borrowers had good credit ratings yet paid the higher subprime rate. In other occasions lenders in cahoots with brokers pressured homeowners to "flip" (refinance) their mortgages to more onerous terms. The banks and mortgage lenders did not care because they made their money on the fees and bundled the mortgages to be sold to institutional investors like pension funds which lost billions when the economy crashed.

In his book, Spitzer argues that instead of being passive investors,



TIMOTHY KRAUSE

SPITZ'S BLITZ: Former Governor Eliot Spitzer hits the campaign trail on July 8 after his surprise announcement that he would run for New York City Comptroller.

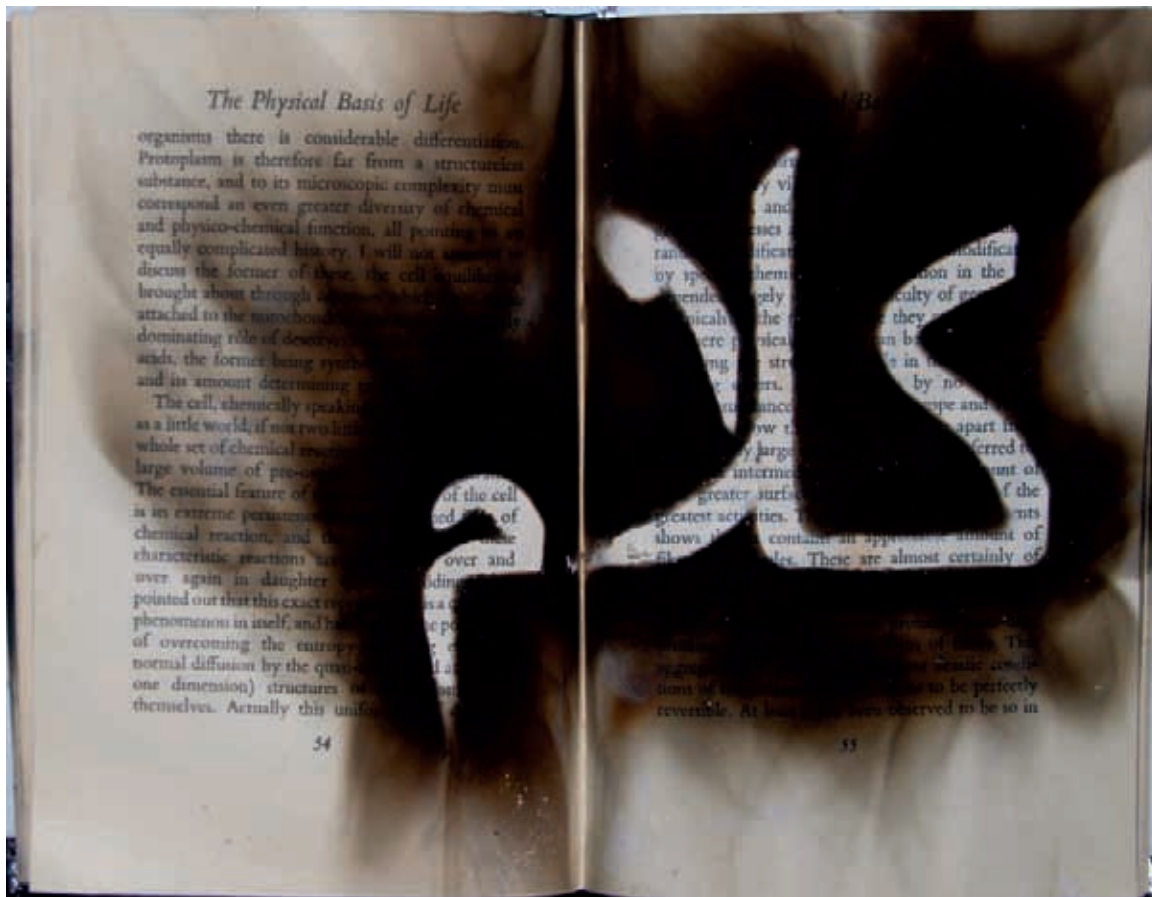
public pension funds should leverage their clout to force changes on the companies they do business with such as reining in CEO pay plans. For Jonathan Tasini of workinglife.org, the prospect of a Comptroller Spitzer galvanizing other pension funds around the world to collaborate with him in forcing rogue banks and corporations to change their behavior is

one to relish.

"He's perfect for this," Tasini notes approvingly. "He's arrogant. He doesn't give a ..., at this stage, what people say about him."

Spitzer briefly mentions Occupy Wall Street in *Protecting Capitalism* and wrote numerous articles praising the movement back in 2011. His is a vision of using strong government regulation and the as-

sertion of shareholder rights to tame the worst aspects of neoliberal capitalism. It's one that is likely to underwhelm Occupiers and others who believe deeper, more fundamental challenges to the status quo are in order. Nonetheless, *Protecting Capitalism* makes it clear why Wall Street loathes Spitzer so much and desperately hopes his comeback bid will fall short.



Artist's book *Under One Moon 1* (of 3) by Janet Bradley (2012). Arabic word "kalaam," itself meaning "word," on *The Physical Basis for Life* by J. D. Bernal.

Word

Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here
CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS
INTERNATIONAL PRINT CENTER NEW YORK
ALWAN FOR THE ARTS
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S BUTLER LIBRARY
POETS HOUSE
Through September 21

Al-Mutanabbi was good with words. He may have been too good: the famous 10th century Iraqi poet was killed by a man he had once insulted in verse. Though it was named in his honor, Baghdad's al-Mutanabbi Street — known in the modern imagination for its rows of bookshops, book stalls and cafés — is said to have been an intellectual hub since some time in the 8th century, well before the poet's death. Even with the pressures of Saddam Hussein's rule, international sanctions, and the 2003 U.S. invasion and subsequent occupation, al-Mutanabbi Street was renowned as a part of Baghdad where intellectual life flourished and people from all of Iraq's diverse communities mingled. Intellectuals browsed through rows of books, students discussed ideas in cafés, and writers found inspiration in rare and beautiful bits of literature.

Al-Mutanabbi Street was filled with words, and for some, that was too much. In March of 2007, the street was hit with a devastating car bomb, killing 30 people and destroying shops, cafés and countless books. It's a sad truth: for all its charms, paper burns fast.

The touring exhibition "Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here," currently on view across five different venues in Manhattan, began as a project by San Francisco poet and

bookseller Beau Beausoleil (the exhibit is organized by Beausoleil and UK book artist Sarah Bodman). In a 2010 interview, Beausoleil explained how it began: "I felt this connection between al-Mutanabbi Street and here, and myself, on a visceral level. If I were an Iraqi, a bookseller, a poet, I would be on that street. I felt we needed some sort of response from our own arts community." Beausoleil reached out to an international array of letterpress printers, poets and book artists, and the exhibition includes a collection of some 250 artists' books and 50 letterpress-printed broadsides made in response to the bombing.

Beausoleil's initial focus on letterpress printing — a method rooted in the earliest days of printed books — makes sense as a commemoration of a place whose intellectual lineage predates book-printing by more than half a millennium. Many of the books in the show aim for a similarly old-fashioned aesthetic. Though the event that prompted their creation feels like something intractably and terribly modern — an anonymous car bomb in the midst of a 21st-century military occupation — the works employ age-old methods and materials, including woodcut printing, hand lettering, handmade paper, coffee grounds, sewing thread and charcoal. The effect is sometimes strained, but the goal is to make something that feels timeless, to reinforce the point that books and ideas have the enviable power to outlive us all.

The exhibition itself doesn't present any sort of official position on the war in Iraq, nor on war in general; in its press materials, Beausoleil's Al-Mutanabbi Street Coalition claims that this is not an "antiwar" project. Looking at the artwork, though, it feels quite clear

that this is an antiwar show. The destruction of cultural objects — the burning of libraries, the looting of museums — is a common, and arguably integral, element of war (think of the U.S.-led forces' failure to prevent the ransacking of Iraq's national museums and library less than a month after the March 2003 invasion). Much of the artwork in this exhibit proudly takes the side of pens, paper, printers' ink and written words, and tells us that these things are natural enemies of violence and that a culture of ideas is not a culture of war. Or, to quote from a boldly-colored accordion-fold book by Helen Frederick, Peter Winant, Susan Tichy and Lutfiya al-Dulaimi: "Fire burns paper / Paper absorbs ink / Ink drowns fire."

The project's overall position — not a focused political statement, but a broad display of artistic solidarity — is sensible but also limiting. Beausoleil says that the name "Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here" points to shared intellectual experience: the idea is that al-Mutanabbi Street can be anywhere someone writes a poem or creates a book. But of course, that's not really true. Al-Mutanabbi Street is an actual place, located in a deeply conflicted region, where dozens of people were once killed by a bomb. Even if there are aspects of the tragedy (and the war) that this show can't hope to tackle, it's still a remarkable memorial project and a strong reminder of the perseverance of creativity in the face of violence. As Barbara Tetenbaum's hand-printed book insert puts it, "A bomb explodes just once. A book, a thousand times."

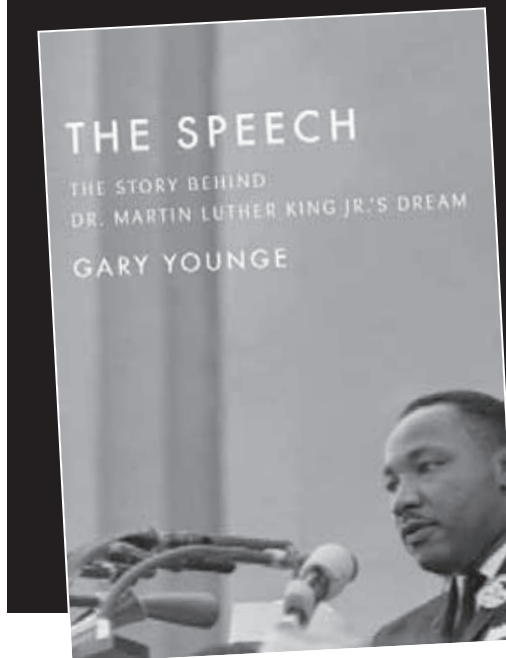
—MIKE NEWTON

For more information, see centerforbookarts.org.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DELIVERED his powerful "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28, 1963. Fifty years later, the speech endures as a defining moment in the civil rights movement. It continues to be heralded as a beacon in the ongoing struggle for racial equality.

This gripping book is rooted in new and important interviews with Clarence Jones, a close friend of and draft speechwriter for Martin Luther King Jr., and Joan Baez, a singer at the march, as well as Angela Davis and other leading civil rights leaders. It brings to life the fascinating chronicle behind "The Speech" and other events surrounding the March on

Washington. Younger skillfully captures the spirit of that historic day in Washington and offers a new generation of readers a critical modern analysis of why "I Have a Dream" remains America's favorite speech.



www.haymarketbooks.org



How will you get your summer reading this year?

For as little as \$15.00 a month we'll deliver every book AK Press publishes to you.

Be a friend, and sign up today!

www.akpress.org/friends.html

CELEBRATING

20 years

SERVING MANHATTAN

Is it really Free? The answer is simply "yes." Manhattan Neighborhood Network has been serving the Manhattan community with **FREE** access to video equipment for over 15 years. We only thrive if Manhattan Residents use our **FREE** equipment.

Don't know how to use it? We also have **FREE** Final Cut Studio Classes. All you have to do is bring in proof that you live in Manhattan!



537 West 59th Street

| www.mnn.org

| 212-757-2670 x312

| Facebook + Twitter

**For Manhattan Residents ONLY*